THE DIALOGUES OF William Richworth;

OR,

The judgment of common ſenſe in the choice of Religion.

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TO THE READER.

MR. William Richworth *born in* Lincolnshire *studied in the English Colledg at* Doway, *there was made Priest, and afterwards discharged the place and office of* Prefect *with much commendation, all which time he was known by the name of* Charles Rois. *Coming into* England *he lived in divers places with good esteem until the year* 1637. *in which he died. He was a man curious in* Divinity, Controversies, Mathematicks, & Physick, *but chiefly delighted in* Mathematicks *and by the name of* Robinson *entertained correspondence with the learned* Oughtred. *He affected the rigour of mathematical discourse even in his controversies, as you may perceive by this Work, and thought no man truly learned but who aymed to do the like. These Dialogues he framed some years agone, and shewed them to several friends of his, which finding they gave content to divers judicious persons, he intended to inlarge and publish them, but hindered by some occasions so that he could not finish and perfect them before his death, he bequeathed his papers and this charge to a friend, to whom he had often communicated his design. Here now you have them divided into three parts, the first containing and declaring how and what points of controversies are of necessity. The second shewing that Scripture alone is not a fit judg nor able of it self to decide controversies in Religion. The third and last demonstrates an evident and infallible means of determining and deciding all questions and disputes of faith and Religion, which God grant may be to your profit.*

THE

APPROBATION.

HAving peruſed and conſidered by leave and order from our ſacred Faculty of Divinity a little treatiſe entitled, *The Dialogues of* William Richworth, *or the judgment of common ſenſe in the choice of Religion*, containing 36. Sheets in writing, and 9. printed in 12. we do certifie that there is not any thing contained therein againſt Catholick faith or Chriſtian piety, but many rational and connatural proofs and motives of them both; And therefore do judg it truly worthy our approbation and the publick. *Paris* this 7. of *April*, 1640.

H. HOLDEN. E. TYREL.

The first DIALOGUE.

What points of controverſie in matters of Religion *are to be.*

This Dialogue containeth 12. Parts or Paragraphs.

1. THE *Preface or Introduction.*

2. *Whence proceedeth and dependeth the neceſſity of knowing points of* Religion?

3. *That the points wherein the* Arrians *and other antient Hereticks differed from the Catholick Church were points of neceſſity to be known and believed.*

4. *That the belief of the Hierarchy eſtabliſhed by Chriſt in his Church is of neceſſity.*

5. *That the adminiſtration of Sacraments by the Hierarchy is likewiſe of neceſſity.*

6. *That the reſolutions of General Counſels are to decide con-*

troverſies both in points of neceſſity and of indifferency.

7. *That the maintenance of the unity of the Church is of neceſſity.*

8. *That ſome things may be of neceſſity in a lower degree, and in particular the uſe of Pictures.*

9. *That the honouring of Saints, their Canonization, and the inſtitution of Religious Orders are neceſſary in this ſame degree.*

10. *That the Sacraments of Order and Matrimony, the Generality of Ceremonies, and the opinion of Miracles are alſo neceſſary.*

11. *That Prayer for the dead, Extreme Unction and Confeſſion be likewiſe neceſſary.*

12. *That good inſtitutions are not to be given over for ſmall inconveniences, the abuſes are to be mended, not the things taken away, and therefore that the party which broke communion is to return to the other.*

The

The Introduction.

NEPHEW.

1. THis is the firſt day of the new year, and therefore me thinks it would be a great offence to imploy it wholly in Paſtimes, and not give ſome handſel to virtue by ſome ſerious and good diſcourſe, which may engage, and ſerve me for a patern of well doing all the year after. Wherefore though it be late, yet I know Uncle, that you (whoſe well ſpent age and travails have made you able and fit to give light and guidance to my unſettled years) can preſently give me ſuch a leſſon as that I ſhall eaſily better my ſelf thereby all the year following.

Uncle. I ſhould be very unkinde, loving Cozen, if I ſhould refuſe ſuch a requeſt to you, whom the marriage of my neareſt and deareſt Kinſwoman maketh me love and tender as one who hath mine own bloud and joy in his care and cuſtodie. But as I am glad to ſee this inclination in you, which I hope will ſtrengthen with your age, ſo doth the choiſe of the time you make, being now the hotteſt ſeaſon of the day for gaming, make me wonder at your unuſuall temperance.

Nephew. Yeſternight was the end of the laſt year, and ſo I made even with the world, nor have I as yet begun again, and therefore I took occaſion to withdraw my ſelf when the company ſat down to play, with intention to beſtow ſomewhat better the little that's left of this good day.

Uncle. Why then, Cozen, I think I know my theam, you loſt all your monies yeſternight, and now you are weary with looking on others all this day, and therefore I muſt tell you how damageable and fruitleſs a thing play is, eſpecially to young Gentlemen who are coming, or newly come to their eſtates. Speak plainly, ſweet Cozen, is it not ſo?

Nephew. Indeed, Uncle, for the firſt part you have hit very right, but for the latter I ſhall entreat you not to touch upon that ſtring at this time, at leaſt untill the Twelfth-day be paſſed. For my Father promiſed me monies when mine were loſt, and you know how ſweet revenge is, ſo that I ſhall be in a better diſpoſition to hear you diſcourſe of this ſubject after Chriſtmas when all the company is gone. What you ſhould now ſay of this matter, would be, I fear, a bitter and diſtaſtfull Pill without effect, my diſeaſe being at this preſent in it's criſis, any thing elſe will take much better, I ſhall profit more, and you will be in leſs danger to loſe your labour.

Uncle. Well, Cozen, ſeeing you are unwilling of that diſcourſe I will not trouble you therewith, upon condition that after Twelf-tide you will not fail to come to me with preparation to receive that doom which I ſhall lay upon you or your Chriſtmaſs treſpaſſes. In the *interim* I conceive nothing more fitting than to inform you of the chiefeſt and moſt important affair that you can have upon earth. You know you have been born and bred a Catholick, And you know it is their belief and *tenent* that all we Catholicks are obliged to venter life and fortunes for the profeſion of our faith. Is it not then a great ſhame for a Catholick Gentleman to know full well how to govern his temporal eſtate, till his grounds breed his cattell, ſolicite his ſuits in law, and manage all his terreſtrial affairs, and not know Why in ſuch an occaſion he ought to hazard, yea and if need be, to loſe and caſt all away in the very ſight of his lamenting friends,

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ſome upbraiding and ſome condemning his action as fooliſh and indiſcreet?

Nephew. I pray, Uncle, do not lay ſo hard a cenſure upon me, nor think me ſo ignorant of thoſe things without the knowledg whereof I cannot be a Catholick. And you know we cannot be admitted to the Sacraments, nor can we be eſteemed and reputed Catholicks unleſs we believe that the reward we expect in heaven is far beyond the pleaſures of this world. And truly conſidering what Chriſt Jeſus hath done and ſuffered for us, it were moſt baſe and unworthy of a gratefull ſoul to fear to yield up life and goods when it is for his honour and glory. Nor do I think that more violent and efficacious reaſons and motives can be given to a noble heart than theſe. I confeſs if you would ſearch into the metaphyſical grounds and principals of theſe truths, I ſhould perhaps light ſhort of giving a full account, but my age and natural unſtedfaſtneſs plead my excuſe as yet, peradventure when I grow elder I may prove more booki ſh and then turn the Scripture and Fathers, and ſo become able to give a more ſolid account of our *tenents*, but as yet this is not to be expected at my hands.

Uncle. Fear not, Couſin, any hard meaſure from me, who love you ſo tenderly, neither is that the point I intended to deliver unto you. But ſithēce the greater part of your kindred are of a different belief from you, I deſire to enable you to give them ſatisfaction, why you do adhere ſo ſtrongly to the Catholick party, as to hazard your own and poſterities welfare for the maintenance of your faith and profeſſion. Neither am I ignorant of your youthfull diſpoſition, and therefore will I abſtain from myſtical and ſublime Metaphyſicks, and onely, or at leaſt chiefly make uſe of what you know already, and what common ſenſe and ordinary natural reaſon is able to perform. Wherefore to make the firſt breach, I pray tell me Couſin, what anſwer would you give to a near friend who ſhould blame you

for ruining your estate in the defence and maintenance of a position which is against the judgment of your kindred, friends, countrey, and state?

Nephew. I would lay open unto him how that our Church and our Doctrine hath been ever preached and taught from Christ's time in all countries of the world, what abundance of holy Martyrs and learned men we have had, how all Christian Nations have been converted by us, and such like motives, which are able to secure any wise man from doubting, and must needs convince the truth to be on our side, our Adversaries being but upstarts of an hundred years old. Which if any should contest, and deny these things to be true, I would offer to produce men who should prove and justifie all I said against any Doctor he should bring.

Uncle. Very well, but if your friend reply, that they willingly confess these things have been done by the common Ancestours of both Catholicks and Protestants, which were the true Church, but many errours by little and little have encroached and crept in amongst them, which when they were discovered, those who now adhere to the Roman Church would not acknowledg, but through obstinacy and desire of sovereignty brake communion. And farther that these divisions are not truly divisions in Religion but in opinion; so that both sides remain still parts of the true Church, though so much transported by their first heats and passions as that causlesly they deny communion one to the other. And says he, if you look into the points of these divisions, they are but such as be in the Roman Church it self betwixt *Thomists* and *Scotists*, *Dominicans* and *Jesuits*, who proceed so far as to charg one another with *Pelagianisme* and *Calvinisme*, which nevertheless doth not make different Churches, even by the Catholicks own confession. And why then should the Protestants be of another Church than the Catholicks are of? What would you answer to this?

Nephew.

Nephew. I am not so ignorant but I see well enough that all manner of differences ought not to make a breach in Churches, and yet that some may. For I see men go to law and have quarrels, and both parties not onely tolerated in the Common-wealth, but held good members of it. And yet others I see punished for their quarrels and contentions. And if I do not mistake the reason of this disparitie is, that as long as these quarrels are betwixt private men, so long they are suffered and born withall, but if once the Common-Wealth take part with one side, giving judgment in the cause disputed and thereby interess it self in the business, if then the other side yield not, it is justly accounted punishable and an evil member of the Common-Wealth. And indeed thus to disagree under a Head or Rule which can bring the disagreers to agreement is rather to agree than disagree, because they agree in a thing (to wit in a mutually acknowledged head and common Rule) which is stronger than the causes of their disagreement, and therefore their disagrement is onely for a time, untill that Head and Rule have a convenient and fit opportunity to reduce the disagreers to a full and total agreement. This daily experience teacheth us in our own Common-Wealth, which having once given a final sentence and determinate judgment betwixt party and Party the suit is ended, and who should disobey would be punished for contempt. So likewise in the Church, which is a spiritual Common-Wealth, such differences as be amongst those who refer themselves to her judgment, and acknowledg her decisive authority, are and may be tolerated to what terms soever the parties grow amongst themselves. But such differences as trench upon her authority, and are betwixt those whereof the one party will not acknowledg her defining power, nor stand to her judgment, such differences, I say, make Aliens and deserve to be cut off from communion.

What differences in Religion make schisme.

Uncle. You have discourſed well, but not home at leaſt to the ſecond part of the reply, about the points themſelves, whether they be but matters of opinion or no, what ſay you to that?

Nephew. That alſo is evident to me, to wit that the points diſputed betwixt Catholicks and Proteſtants are moſt material and ſubſtantial ones, For ſuppoſe Chriſt's body be truly and really in the Bleſſed Sacrament, and that t'is God himſelf which the Prieſt ſheweth the people to adore, it ſurely can be no ſlight offence not to give him due honour; nor contrarywiſe no ſmall crime to adore that for God which truly is not ſo. If Chriſt have left the authority of *government* to Biſhops, of *Abſolution* from ſins to Prieſts, it is no indifferent nor petty buſineſs to take them out of the Church. If it be Idolatry to honour Images, pray to Saints, and the like, can we think it no great matter whether we do ſo or no, ſeeing the Scripture full of ſo many plagues falling upon the Jews for Idolatry?

Uncle. Why, Couſin, may not a Proteſtant anſwer you likewiſe, that if one of the opinions controverted betwixt *Thomiſts* and *Scotiſts* be *Pelagianiſme* the other *Calviniſme*, can you think that ſuch points are of ſmall importance? Wherefore he will tell you, that all ſuch points are very hard queſtions, grave, learned, and unpaſſionate men on both ſides, and therefore whatſoever the truth be in it ſelf, yet ſo long as God Almighty ſees our hearts to be right towards him, and that we deſire to do what his Law teacheth us, ſo far as we are able to know it, all theſe and the like opinions are but onely material errors, and do not hinder us from being good Chriſtians.

Nephew. Truly, Uncle, you have puſled me now, for unleſs ſuch points and queſtions do trench upon the Churches authority, why ſhould not the Church bear with ſuch opinions, but ſo ſeverely caſt them out of communion, and ſhut heaven gates upon the Authours and Beginners of them? Certes, unleſs there be ſome neceſſity why certain points are to be known by the whole

Church

Church, others not, I confess I cannot answer you, but I come to learn, and therefore when my own discourse reacheth not, I must crave your helping hand to direct me. And I shall think the year well handselled if you make me understand what points are to be known of necessity and why; but first, I pray, tell me.

§. 2. *Whence proceedeth and dependeth the necessity of knowing points of Religion?*

UNCLE. To set you in the way, you must first tell me what you think this word necessity doth import, so far as it concerns our purpose?

Nephew. You know I am no great Clerk, and therefore I cannot speak of necessity neither as a Grammarian nor as a Logician, but as far as I understand and intend by my question, there is two sorts of necessities, the one so absolute as that the thing we desire cannot without such a mean be any ways gotten or done; the other in respect of such a means without the which our desire cannot be well and conveniently obtained. For we commonly say that such or such a thing cannot be done or gotten, when it is extreme hard and painfull to get it. And therefore some times we call that necessary without which our desire cannot be fulfilled but with great labour and difficulty, and sometimes that, without which it cannot absolutely be compassed.

Uncle. Mary cozen, you need neither Grammarian nor Logician to help you, nor to mend what you have said. But since you are so skilfull, and that you now see what is necessary in general, to wit, *the knowledge of Christian Doctrine* I will trouble you with a farther demand, giving you first this *Caveat*. That my intention is not to examine or declare what express and distinct knowledg or belief

The necessity of knowing points of Faith is to be compared to a Church or Company of Believers, and not to every particular Man.

lief ought every particular and individual man to have, without which he cannot possibly be saved, this being a thing depending of so many secret and unknown circumstances, as that it seemeth to be specially reserved as onely befitting Gods infinite wisdom and divine justice, though sometimes a prudent man may shroudly guess, and in a possible supposition of a particular mans dying without repentance in a positive and wilfull contradicting belief to the Doctrine of the Catholique Church, it would be no breach of charity to conclude his damnation. Yet at this present we will onely speak of the necessity of knowing and believing severall controverted points of Christian Doctrine in respect of a Church or Company of professed Christians in common, and not as the knowledg thereof is necessary to every particular man. Now therefore tell me, what is the end for which this knowledg of Christian Doctrine is necessary?

Nephew. That I suppose no man doubteth but it is heaven, or in more learned terms, the sight, or true and proper knowledg of Almighty God, who being the cause and Creator of all things, he that clearly sees and truly knows him, will see and know all other things in him, which all together fall so far short of giving such content as is taken by seeing him, that the sight of him is onely accounted bliss, and the sight of all the rest is but a retinue and convenience of that first and chief sight, which of it self alone is our essential happiness.

How the knowledg of Christian Doctrine cometh to be necessary to salvation.

Uncle. This I confess Cousin, is both very true and very well said of you, but yet I must have another answer: for sure you have over-skipt something. What connection is there I pray, betwixt the knowledg of Christian Doctrine and seeing of Almighty God. Something I say, must of necessity be betwixt them, for which, whatsoever it be, the knowledg of Christian Doctrine will be more immediately necessary. Which if you can tell me what it is, we shall thereby more easily discover

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and conceive what and how far this knowledg of Christian Doctrine is necessary for us.

Nephew. Why Uncle, you know I have been taught no farther than to know what I ought to believe and do, and that in believing and doing so, I shall come to Heaven.

Uncle. And were you not taught that the Commandements were resumed and comprehended in two, to wit in the love of God and of your Neighbour.

Nephew. Yes that I was, but what that appertains to your question, that I understand not, unless peradventure your meaning be, that the accomplishment of these two Laws is the immediate step to our bliss. Which as I see it is very likely, yet do I not fully conceive why it should be so, unless Heaven go by wishing, whereas I have still been taught it goes by working, and that violence must carry it.

Uncle. Did you never take notice of your self, how that if you hearken to a discourse of any thing which you vehemently desire to know, how attentive you are? how fearfull that any word should slip unheard or not understood? how quiet you keep all your thoughts? how still and untroubled your fansie? that what you hear may sink down into your soul as distinctly, and in the same frame and order as it floweth from the speaker? So you see that the love or desire to know any thing is the most efficacious disposition we can have to attain to the knowledg thereof. Now you know that this life and conversation of the soul in her body is given her to prepare and dispose her self for the next life: Is it not therefore evident that that soul which most desires to see and know God, that is, which most loveth God in this life, and particularly in the time of her departure out of this world, goes out of her body with the best and perfectest preparation & disposition to see & know God in the life to come, which is our expected and eternal happiness? Nor is this against what you have been taught, for love is the most active, and consequently the most violent

thing in the world, and therefore if Heaven muſt be obtained by violence: love certainly muſt be the way. Wherefore you ſee, we are to conſider the neceſsity of controverted points of Religion, in as much as of their own nature and of themſelves, they do cauſe and make profeſſors of Chriſtianity to love God, and deſire to ſee him. For ſince this love and deſire is the means and way to Heaven, it muſt needs follow that according as any point or poſition doth produce or contribute to this effect in the ſouls of Chriſtians, the neceſsity of ſuch a point muſt be of the ſame degree. There is a neceſsity of believing all points of faith in general, out of another principle, to wit, in that the Church propoſeth them unto us as ſuch, which we muſt accept and believe in all or none, being the ſame reaſon and motive in all, but this I ſhall take occaſion another time to ſhew unto you. You will ſay, peradventure if this be ſo, what needs the knowledg of Chriſtian Doctrine? can there be imagined a greater motive of love than that God is, and that he is goodneſs it ſelfe? Is not this alone a ſufficient motive to make all Creatures melt into the love of him? And this ſurely may be known by pure natural reaſon. Why then is the knowledg of points diſputed betwixt the Proteſtants and us to be held neceſſary? Nay to what end muſt we needs know any part of Chriſts Law for the attaining of Bliſs, ſince love will do it, and the moſt efficacious motive of love is to be had without it.

Nephew. You have poſed me now, for truly I ſee that goodneſs is able to raviſh all the hearts in the world, and this ſo clear and common that it needs no proof. Wherefore me thinks if men would conſider and follow this motive of Gods infinite goodneſs, they would not want love, and not wanting love, according to your diſcourſe, they muſt of neceſsity attain to everlaſting bliſs and happineſs. Why therefore any other knowledg ſhould be abſolutely neceſſary I ſee not, much leſs do I conceive wherefore we ſhould think.

§. 3. *That the points wherein the* Arrians, *and other antient* Hereticks *differed from Catholicks, are points of necessitie to be known and believed.*

UNCLE. What think you, Colin, if the motive of love which we speak of, were such, as that few men & great Clerks onely were able to reach and conceive it, nor consequently be moved and affected with it? Do you think some other motive more ealie, more general, and more common, were not necessarie, whereby the people and ordinary sort of men might be moved and affected? Or do you think that man-kinde could be said to have sufficient means to attain to bliss and happiness, if it had onely such an *one*, as that very few could make use of? And that you may the better conceive my question, put the case that on the one side there were such a means as that very few could reach unto it, on the other side such an one as were accommodated to the capacity of every man, do you not see, that to say *man-kinde* may be saved by *this* or *that* means, hath a quite different sense? Man-kinde in the one signifying the whole multitude, in the other a small, or as it were no part of the multitude. For that part of any thing which is so little as that it beareth no moral proportion to the whole, is, in our manner of speaking accounted as none. Do you not then see that it is necessary that the means of our salvation be of this more general and common nature?

Why Gods goodness as knowable by nature is not a sufficient motive of love to all man-kinde.

Nephew. I doubt it not, and mine own interest makes me more inclined thereunto, being, God knows, I am of the weaker sort. And when I consider the good of salvation, and the harm and miserie which follow the loss of it, and that we all acknowledg every man to be capable thereof,

'tis evident that the means of attaining such an infinite *good*, whereunto we are all ordained, ought to reach and lie within the power of all, or at least of the most part of men. But yet I see not why the infinite goodness of God is not a motive sufficiently general and common to move and affect all the World.

Uncle. Why, Cosin, you must consider that there be as it were three steps, or degrees by which we go, or tend to any *good*. The *first*, to apprehend, or understand what it is, The *second* to conceit and esteem it, And the *third* to desire and pursue it, And in the prosecution thereof to prefer it before all other goods which deserve not so well, and in our case to prefer it before all other goods whatsoever, as being the greatest of all. These three degrees be so disposed, as that the last cannot stand nor be put without the second, nor the second without the first, though contrarywise the first may be without the second, and the second without the third, by reason of mans weakness. Now if you consider that *God Almighty* and his goodness is the most simple, sublime, and abstract thing that can possibly be imagined. And reflect but upon the nature of Angels, or of a soul, nay even of a corporal substance seperated from all his sensible accidents and if you had the experience that I have, you would say it were hard, even for the best wits to apprehend rightly, and discourse consequently of these things. And shall we not then think that it is either absolutely impossible, or extremely difficile to make the grosser sort of men apprehend, or understand any thing likely, or to the purpose of *God* and his goodness? Surely we may. And the reason is, because sense and sensible objects are the perpetual matter and subject wherein our understandings are exercised, not onely in our childhood and youth, but even in our whole life, unless some few by the study of

Three degrees of tending to any good.

How hard it is to conceive Gods goodness, or any spiritual thing.

of Metaphysicks do elevate their understandings above the ordinarie pitch of men and course of nature. And therefore it must needs be hard, and as it were impossible, that the greatest part of mankinde should be able to frame any fitting and likely conceit, or Idea of *Almighty God*, or of his goodness. Look but upon the Jews, who had this knowledg inculcated into them by perpetual miracles and Prophets, and yet they could not keep themselves long from running after Idols, because they had nothing to entertain their phansie and their sensible manner of understanding. And now if you call to minde the common saying of Philosophers that *nihil est volitum quod non sit præcognitum*, to which is Parallel the Poets Apopthegme *quod oculi sunt in amore duces*, you shall finde that what is not well rooted and imprinted in the understanding, can never be deeply fixed in the *will*, nor consequently the *will* efficaciously moved and affected by it. And that nothing, and *I know not what* are of the same force and effect in our case, according to *Aristotles* maxim, that in *respect of love* it is all one *not to be*, and *not to be known*, it must necessarily follow that the greatest part of men being not able to make any strong and deep conceit of *God* and his goodness; that 'tis not possible they should be efficaciously moved and affected therewith. And if a Preacher after a long discourse of the *love of God*, and of his great benefits towards us in the order of nature, could not give a satisfactory account by reason, of the weakness of his Auditory, to one that should ask him *who is God*, or *what is he* that hath done all these things for us? Would not his learned labours vanish into a dream, and the people go away as from a Play where they wept at a thing which concerned them not, and were no longer carried away than whilest they sate hearing? I could cite a witness and name a Gentlewoman of your acquaintance, of as sweet a nature and as pure an understanding as is to be found amongst a thousand, with whom having sometimes occasion to discourse about the state of the

next life, she hath often told me, that she believed all those fine things, having ever been taught she must do so, but that they seemed to her as things in a dream, for, quoth she, I shall never be able to conceive what a soul is, when all the body is taken away.

Nephew. Truly, Uncle, you have quite convinced me, for as I see men talk of nothing more familiarly than of *God* and his *goodness*, so likewise I see that if they discourse but of an *Angel*, they presently conceit him to have a body and wings. And if one would force them out of it, they would be besides themselves. So that in very deed not one in ten thousand can make any right conceit of spiritual things. And if you talk to the common people of heaven they conceive it but a dry thing to sit looking upon God Almighty and singing Psalms for all eternity.

Uncle. Well then, Cousin, this being so, that *Gods goodness* is so abstract and sublime as that very few can either know or love it sufficiently in it self, *Suppose* Almighty God of his infinite mercy and goodness towards us, hath so tempered and abessed this too high and inconceivable object by taking mans nature upon him, and hath thereby made it palpable and tractable even to the weakest and grossest understandings, in so much that any man, how dull soever, may with sensible facility fix his minde and love upon it: Nay if he hath adjoyned thereunto the greatest causes of love that heart can wish and bear, to wit, the pains and sufferings of his sacred life and bitter death practised upon his divine person as he was man, the tender expressions whereof we finde recorded in the holy History of the Gospel, can we think that who takes this point of *Gods Incarnation* out of the Church and world, by either denying or doubting of it, but that he doth move an *Important stone*, and that this dogme can be no less than of extreme and main necessity.

why the knowledg of the Incarnation is necessary?

Nephew. Cesses no, 'tis clear in my minde, not onely

onely what you say, but also that such a man as would wrest out this corner stone and pull down this Pillar of the Church, whatsoere he prates of Christ, and bears his name in shew, in truth and verity is no Christian. For he takes away Christ, and annullates his coming. Wherefore if there be any such, no sword, no fire, no torment sufficient to exterminate him, no aversion, no horror, no abomination great enough to make true Christians avoid him.

The Variety of the Oriental errours against Christ's being God and man.

Uncle. I commend your zeal. Now therefore cast your eys upon the Oriental Heresies which anciently reigned, whereof some denied Christ to be *God*, some denied him to be *man*, some said he was neither *God* nor *man* but a third thing made of both: And some said, that he was two things whereof the one was *God*, the other was *man*. All agreed in this, that the same Person was not truly *God* and *man*, and consequently took away this efficacious means and pregnant motive of love, that *God* did do, and suffer for us those sensible and easily conceived benefits which he could not unless he were *man*. And in this consisteth the great and main help of humane nature that by and in the person of a *true* and *sensible man* we might fix our hearts and settle our utmost desires upon our eternal good and happiness. We may therfore conclude with *S. John*, that *whosoever dissolveth Christ is Antichrist*, which all these ancient Hereticks did, to whom we may annex all the Authours of Heresies concerning the *Blessed Trinity*; the knowledg whereof being revealed and delivered unto us to direct us in this great mystery of the *Incarnation*, the errours against *that* must needs reflect upon *this*, and be of the same nature and importance, & consequently of the same necessity, by reason this mystery of the *Incarnation* cannot stand unless the mystery of the Trinity be likewise true. 1 *Jo.* 1.

Nephew. I am fully satisfied in this point, but I pray tell me, good Uncle, is not

§. 4. *The belief of the Hierarchy established by Christ in his Church likewise of necessity.*

FOr what availeth it mankinde that there be such easie means to come to heaven, if out of weakness, waywardness, or carelessness they will not look after it? Surely I cannot see but 'tis onely to the increase of their damnation. Like unto an ambitious man who whilest he is yet a far off from the honour which he aspires unto, he can bear it patiently, but if once he come to a fair possibility, and have it as it were in his hand, Oh! Then if he miss it, he is incapable of all comfort and consolation, and thinks himself the most unhappy and unfortunate man in the world. So I conceive that when a soul is out of her body, and comes to see how easily she might have attained to that eternal Bliss and Happiness, whereunto she was ordained, and that through their own neglect and carelessness she is now to be everlastingly deprived thereof, Oh God! Uncle, how infinitely will she be grieved? how she will curse her self? and thereby increase her pain and misery.

Uncle. You say well, Cousin, can you doubt therefore, or can a Christian think, but 'tis a point of great necessity to man-kinde, *If* there be any order established by Christ Jesus in his Church to make men embrace, accept, and pursue those facile means to salvation, that they know and believe it? Can a man of common sense and judgement imagine that this is not a point of main importance? Or that who disagrees about this position doth onely disagree in matter of opinion, wherein each one may hold what he pleaseth, and not in a matter substantially and fundamentally necessary to salvation?

Nephew. I confess, Uncle, when I consider the frailty of man, and see how easily and ordinarily he

he is withdrawn from *willing* and *following* the means of his beatitude by the least terrestrial, sensual, and momentarie pleasure, it were madness in me to believe that *supposing* there be any such *order* established by Christ in his Church to incite and provoke men to accept and practice these *saving* means, it were, I say, madness not to think the knowledg and belief of such an *order* to be one of the most important and necessary points of Christian Doctrine.

Uncle. Remember then, Cosin, the three steps, or degrees we talked of before, of knowing, esteeming, and pursuing any *good*. And you will finde that, for the *first* it is necessary, the truth of Christian Doctrine be conserved and often inculcated into the hearts and mindes of Christians; for the *second* that those who are to do *this*, have such qualities as will give them credit and make men believe them, and for the *third* that there be means taken (so far as human nature giveth leave) to cut off all such impediments as hinder men from preferring eternal good before the temporal temptations and sensual pleasures of this life. The *first* of these conditions requireth that there be men appointed to have care of the people by instructing and often putting them in minde of Christian Doctrine. Which if Christ have done, 'tis evident that whosoever seeketh to change his *order* and *appointment* doth not quarrel upon a slight point, but upon a most weighty and necessary one.

Nephew. I see well that who seeketh to destroy such an *order* established by Christ, plays with his Church as *Æsope's* Wolves played with the sheep, offering them prey upon condition they would deliver up their Dogs unto them, which being done, they slew and preyed upon the sheep. And me thinks, common sense telleth me there cannot be a point in all Christian Doctrine of greater importance than this. For when I consider why treason is the greatest offence that can be committed in a Common-wealth, I see 'tis because no Law can subsist and hold without guards and lookers

lookers to it, so that who striketh at these guards in a Common-wealth (of what nature soever it be) striketh at the very essential form of it, at all the Laws, and at all whatsoever doth conserve the peace and liberty of the whole people and multitude, whereupon the Common-wealth doth subsist. Wherefore 'tis evident by natural reason that who seeketh to remove and abolish *those* whom *God* hath placed to guard his Church, striketh at the total ruine thereof.

Uncle. 'Tis true, and therefore you may inferr that questions of the Popes authority over Bishops, of Bishops authority over Priests, and of Priests authority over the Layety are of no small moment. And that who goes about to destroy this Hierarchy aimeth at no less than the utter overthrow of Religion, and ruine of the Church planted by Christ Jesus with so much sweat and bloud, and espoused so dearly unto him with his sacred promises. These are the *Angels* to whom *God* hath trusted and committed the *charge of his flock.* These are *they* by whose continual succession we convince the perpetuity of the Catholick Church. These are the *men* who when any new *Blasphemy* ariseth, *meet in Councels to give testimony to the Doctrine of Christ, ever dwelling in the hearts of the faithfull,* and thereby *crush the serpents head.* These are *they* who in their wisdoms, may and ought enact Laws and Canons to Christs flock, and correct abuses creeping in both in discipline and morality leaving still untouched Christs sacred institutions. And therefore who seeketh to extirpate, or infringe this authority in the Church, setteth his ax at the root of *Faith* and *virtue,* by which the Church of Christ doth subsist. Nay, even in schismatical Churches the wiser and more learned sort of men have ever detested and abhorred the confused Anarchy of brain-sick Puritans. And 'tis said that wise states-men do vehemently suspect, and have just cause to suppress all Anti Hierarchists.

Nephew. Certainly no prudent and moderate man can doubt of the importance of this point And me thinks, Uncle, these zealous *Societies* do to the

the maintainer of this Hierarchy, as *Diogenes* did to *Plato*, scorning his vanitie with a far greater pride, for whilest they cry out against the pride of those who seek these dignities established by Christ in his Church, they discover a far greater pride in themselves by endeavoring to destroy so sacred an *institution*, that they themselves may usurp the power and place. But to the second degree and condition of the *division* you made, do you think.

§. 4. *That the administration of the Sacraments by the Hierarchy is of such great necessity.*

UNCLE. How say you Cousin, what power, preeminency, and qualities do you think are necessary for these guards and teachers of Christs Law and Doctrine, to the end that the people may conceit such things as they tell them, and think them to be of moment? for surely the most part of men have need of all the helps that may be, to elevate and raise their mindes to celestial cogitations?

Nephew. I see well enough that such men must needs have credit with the people, and ought not onely to be accounted wise and good men, but should be also esteemed wiser and better than the Layety, for I have heard the Prophets curse cited, *sicut populus sic & Sacerdos.* But this me thinks should not touch upon any necessary point of faith, seeing it depends on their particular lives and imployments, which are known by sense and experience, and not by any tradition from our forefathers.

Uncle. You are mistaken, Cousin, for although 'tis true that the Clergies evil lives may disgrace the motives of reverence bestowed upon them by Christ Jesus, yet if their lives be but tolerable, Christ may have given them such eminent power and dignity as that they will not want that reverence and respect which is fit and comfortable to the function and profession whereunto he hath

called them. And certes, not without necessity, if we consider the credulity and obedience which are required at the peoples hands. Credulity, of things beyond and above nature, nay beyond all the fables (be it spoken with respect) that ever man invented. Obedience of hazarding lives and fortunes, nay of entirely ruining themselves and their posterity (in respect of this world) in such cases as these *instructors* shall tell them that the Law of God commands it and requires it. Wherefore as Kings and Magistrates finde by experience that Pomps and Ceremonies, and the reserving of certain actions and creations to themselves, do breed in their subjects (yea and in strangers too) honour and respect, and therefore are very carefull how they impart and communicate them, still keeping to themselves alone some Regal Priviledges and Prerogatives. So likewise Christ Jesus not unmindfull of his Ministers, left them, and to them onely, the Churches Pomps and Solemnities, but specially the Sacraments, to give them credit and authority thereby. To Bishops the giving of the Holy Ghost or *Confirmation* (Which is a continuance of the Mission of the third Person of the Holy Trinity in the first Christian Pentecost, and therefore who slights Confirmation slights that Mission) and the consecrating of Priests. To Priests the rest of the Sacraments, except Baptism, which by reason of the peoples necessity could not conveniently be reserved to Priests onely, whereof there were to be but few. But chiefly he gave them charge of the *Bloudiless sacrifice of his own body*, and the *power of remitting sins* whereon is principally grounded and subsists the reverence due unto the Church of God. The one being a priviledg beyond mans invention, and such an one, as if all the learned Clerks that ever lived since the beginning of the world, should have studied to raise, advance, and magnifie some one state of men to the highest pitch of *Reverence* and *Eminency* that could be imagined, they could never

Why Priests are to be honoured.

ver (without speciall light from heaven) have thought of any thing comparable to this, And yet so adapted to the secrets of nature, that who should dive into her mysteries would streight at the first proposing of it acknowledg it to be true, because a thing so hidden in the depth of natures bowels could not be invented and applied in this manner by any but the Master of nature it self. The other being so mighty a power over mans nature and so extremely usefull to mankinde, for their help and direction to eternal Bliss, that neither in respect of the aw which it strikes into their subjects, nor in respect of the profit, which (being conveniently used) resulteth from it, there is nothing in this world any way estimable in comparison thereof. What think you then, Cousin, who seeketh to take away the real presence of Christs body in the *B: Sacrament*, and the power of *absolving sins*, doth he quarrel upon trifles? Be not these points (which we hold as true and as certain, and upon the same grounds, as we do the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*) of main consequence and importance? And doth not he shake the fundamental *Basis*, and chief Corner-stone of the Churches building who takes away this power and authority from her *Judges* and *ministers*, whereby they were so reverenced and honored as that they were believed and obeyed? And finally by these questions to be left indifferent to every idle brain and private phantie to think and practise what he pleases?

Nephew. I must needs confess I never considered thus much before, for truly I see that the Administration of the Sacraments are necessary for this end, though I have heard the Sacraments are necessary for many other ends. But now I easily conceive that if the clergy be not of credit, it cannot have the effect which it was made and ordained for, and if it hath not its effect, it causeth not the keeping of Christs Law, and if Christs Law be not kept, there is no salvation. So that 'tis evident the Clergy needeth the greatest props and means of *credit* and *reverence* that can be had.

And surely what Common-Wealth soever highly esteems of Gods Law and Christian doctrine, would wish the Clergy these very qualities, if they had them not already. Wherefore I wonder not that the Puritans, who mainly oppose Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, do so hate and detest the doctrine of the B. *Sacrament*, because they think all *Popery* is built upon that great sacrifice. And I remember when I was in *France*, I perceived that *going to Mass* was held the chief distinctive sign and action betwixt a *Catholick* and a *Calvinist*. So that considering these supernatural and never sufficiently honoured qualities of Priests, I easily believe the story which is told of *S. Francis*, that he said, if he should meet a *Priest* and an *Angel* he would first salute the Priest.

Uncle. You say well, and surely were all Priests lives such as did not partly disgrace these gifts bestowed upon them, I doubt not but Kings would lay their Crowns and Scepters at their feet, and wear their swords at their devotion, which antiquity telleth us hath been done and practised. Yea those Tribunals and that temporal power and jurisdiction (concerning which the Clergy doth now perhaps too much contend with the Layety) were at the first forced upon holy Bishops against their wills, either by particular mens piety and agreement, or by the Emperours commands. The world then thinking him unworthy to live that would not condemn himself if the Bishop judged against him, and both anciently in *S. Hugh* of *Lincoln*, and lately in *S. Charls* of *Milan*, the Christian world hath seen how great a power the *Reverence* of a Bishop hath, even in respect of Kings, when his life corresponds and seconds his Dignity.

Nephew. But I pray, Uncle, do you think that the greatest necessity of the Sacraments doth consist in *this*, that by the reservation of their administration to the Clergy, the Clergies authority might be more exalted and fitter to serve the Church? I have heard other reasons preferred before this, and therefore me thinks you should more

more insist upon that necessity which in it self is the greatest and most forcible, than upon a lesser.

Uncle. Why, Cousin, I do not intend to alledg all the reasons wherefore the Sacraments are necessary, but onely some forcible one, whereby it may follow that such questions as are betwixt Catholicks and Protestants concerning those points, may appear to be of importance, and so fundamental, as that Christian Religion cannot have its subsistance and progress without the knowledg of the truth in such questions and positions. And certes if credit and authority be the onely, or at least, the main instrument and principal means whereby the Preachers of Christianity can press and promote Christian doctrine, And that this credit and authority is incomparably more raised and strengthened by the Catholick *position* than by the Protestents *negative*, it must needs follow that the efficacity of Christian Preachers, and the strength of their cause is without comparison greater amongst Catholicks than amongst Protestants, which doubtless cannot but move any reasonable man, who thinks and believes that our eternal good relyes and depends upon Christian doctrine. I know there be other necessities of the Sacraments. As for the Unity of the Church, which being dispersed through the whole world could not be otherwise conserved than by the practise of some external actions common to them all whereby they might know one the other. As also for the augmentation of charity and grace by the frequentation of them. But these points have their proper Treatises and places belonging unto them It sufficeth I have shewed you that there ought to be men appointed whose *care*, *function*, and *imployment* is to teach and conserve in the people the truth of Christian doctrine, and that for this effect those men must needs have some qualities above the ordinary sort of men to authorise and give credit to their documents. For although this doctrine of its own nature tend to the highest degree of perfection, and consequently deserves

of it self to be infinitely esteemed and honoured, yet being supernatural, that is far above the innate capacity and reach of man, the Preachers and Teachers thereof must of necessity be endowed with extraordinary power and authority to give credit thereunto. Which supposed we may proceed farther, to the *third degree and condition* of removing impediments hindering the prosecution of our eternal good, and first inquire whither.

§. 6. *The resolutions of General Councils be sufficient to decide controversies of faith, both in points of necessity, and of indifferency.*

TEll me then, Cousin, is it think you lawfull for a private man to whose care the Church is not committed, to doubt in himself, and breed doubts in others, touching such points as these pastors of Christs flock, (who by their Function and profession have the Churches government committed unto them) are agreed upon, and teach with common consent to the whole Church?

Nephew. First I see Uncle, that such a man shall not easily induce men to believe him against so great an opposition, and that therefore he had need of bettter grounds in such points than in others. Secondly I see that no wise man will oppose the opinion of so many authorised experts, or held for experts, and *that* in a matter of their profession, without far greater and more pregnant reasons in this particular business, than would be necessary in another, wherein he had not such main prudential motives against him. But whither there be any obligation in conscience, or whither this be a matter of such importance as to make a fundamental point of Religion of it, that I know not. For contrarywise me thinks there should be also an obligation in conscience, when a man findes that these Governours are mistaken, that he should oppose them to the utmost of his power.

Uncle.

Uncle. You do not fully conceive my question, which is this, whither because these men have the charge and care to teach Gods Law in the Church (setting aside all other difficulties) there be an Obligation in reason upon this precise ground, nor easily to oppose their determination without being certain and secure of very good footing? nor to attempt any thing against their verdict without evidence? Because, say I, to what purpose is their judgment if it be as free to oppose them after as before?

Nephew. As for *Obligation* I told you, Uncle, I know not of any, but this I see, common sense and natural reason teacheth us, that such as have the charge and care of instructing others, are supposed to have more understanding in the doctrine which they teach, than those who learn of them. And therefore if any disputes or controversies arise in such matters, I see 'tis fitter these Teachers should be the judges thereof than those who learn. And in a matter of skill to appeal from them (when a great and universal part of the wisest have given their consenting judgment) to the Layety is as absurd as to appeal from Masters to scholars, or from men of one profession to men of another.

Uncle. Why this is all I ask, for where one part is absurd in reason, the other must needs be certain by the same reason, And what is absurd in practise, 'tis certain that ought to be avoided. Wherefore if I mistake not, your discourse concludes, that whersoever the question is of skill, there no man ought to appeal from them who have charge and care to Teach, to those who learn in matters of that art. And therefore if those who have the charge and care to Teach Christian Doctrine do constantly and generally agree in any point after they have heard and considered the oppositions made against them, neither ought any man appeal unto the Layety, nor can the Layety without presumption and rashness accept of his appeal, nor make themselves judges in a business of other mens profession,

wherein themſelves are ignorant, or, at the moſt ſcholars. Now therefore ſince in our caſe there is no means for any man to prevail againſt the Clergy (whom we ſuppoſe agreed amongſt themſelves in any point or poſition) but by making the Layety judges thereof, 'tis evident that it will be ſtill againſt reaſon for any man to attempt the innovating of any new point or poſition againſt the Clergies common verdict, and general conſent; And conſequently an obligation of reaſon and conſcience not to do it. Hence it follows that there is a power and authority in the Clergy of determining and deciding queſtions of Chriſtian doctrine (whereof they are the Teachers) and a neceſſity in the Layety (who are their ſcholars) of obeying and quieting themſelves. For the nature of ſedition and faction is nothing elſe, but to remove the queſtion from them who truly have, or by their places are ſuppoſed to have skill, to them who have, or may be preſumed to have, none, that is from the *Governours* to the *ſubjects*, from the *skilfull* to the *ignorant*, and from *natives*, to *Aliens*. Secondly it follows, that there can be but two caſes onely in which one may oppoſe theſe determinations and deciſions. For 'tis manifeſt that nothing but *evidence* of the truth can juſtifie any innovation of this kinde, becauſe where there is no evidence the caſe ought not to be put to judgment, and ſupreme judgment being already known and giving (as in our caſe) there is no farther place for judgment, and therefore onely *evidence* can be heard. Now this *evidence* either is ſo great as that there needs no skill to conceive and underſtand it; and then the Layety may be admitted as judges, Or elſe the *Eminence* of the *Introducer* is ſuch, as that a point may be *evident* to him, and yet not to the greateſt part of the Clergy, who are the natural judges of this cauſe. Wherefore every *Innovator* muſt of neceſſity pretend one of theſe two. The firſt he cannot.

What is ſedition.

Nothing but evidence is a lawfull Warrant to oppoſe judgment.

not without charging the whole Clergy of perverse and wilfull opposition and contradiction of of the known truth; and so plainly known, that every man sees it at the first opening and proposing of it, Which whether it was ever done, or is possible to be done, I leave it to the judgment of any indifferent man. The second cannot any way belong to the ignorant and unskilfull people, And therefore the *Innovator* must in such a case seek out the most learned of the Clergy, and to them propose his reasons, but must not in any case publish his science to the vulgar ignorant (whom we suppose uncapable of it) for fear of sedition and faction. And in this case, as perhaps this point of doctrine may be necessary, or at least convenient for the higher Orders of the Clergy, so likewise it cannot be necessary for the vulgar people, since we suppose them incapable of it. And therefore this *eminent Introducer* must never make it common to the Layety, much less appeal from the Clergy to them. And thus you see that all controversies in Religion must be remitted to the judgement of the Clergy, that is in Catholick language to an *œcumenical Council.*

Nephew. Me thinks, Uncle, I could object one thing against your discourse, to wit, that 'tis not in mans liberty to think, or judg what he will of any position, such an act being a natural operation, and therefore that no man ought to be forced to believe this or that. And to say the truth, what can I think whether the great *Turk* be a tall or low man; whether the number of the Stars be odd or even? if my life laid on't, I could not think either part.

Uncle. I, Cosin, but if the great *Turks* true statue were in *Westminster*, and that for going thither you might know his height, or that the true number of the stars were set down in an *Almanack* which you might buy for a Groat, I believe if your life laid on't you would easily be resolved to think the truth,

Nephew. Mary, that's true, but then I were not forced to think or judg one part, but onely

to seek out the truth, and so come naturally, to think it.

Uncle. Why then likewise if the Church command you to think and belelive *that* which by seeking you may easily come to know, not she but you are to blame if you do not believe what she commands. And if her authority be greater than any argument which can be brought to the contrary, and greater than the most part of the reasons whereupon you build all the beliefs which govern your life and action, may you not securely believe what she believes. Or if you please, do but seek out the motives which makes the Church her self believe what she Teacheth, and you will easily believe with her. But if you will not attend to the means which would make you know and believe the truth, is it not fitting you should be forced to your own good, as fools and vitious men are to follow reason? Some men, you know, do things by force which otherwise they would never do. And as doggs abstain from good bits for fear of beating, so passionate men come now and then to reason for fear of punishment.

Nephew. 'Tis true a passionate man doth never see reason, and yet thinks all other men unreasonable, his passion ever making him judg amiss; And therefore truly I do not see why men should not be punished for their passions, and so be forced to leave them.

Uncle. If that be so, Cousin, you will finde that your argument hath a greater extent than you are aware of. For if you consider how few there be that are not carried away with passion, or intereſt, and how secretly these dispositions ly hid in the mindes and actions, even of the best men; And then look into the nature of our Soul, and see that nothing but *evidence* can strongly move and draw her of it self, or by its own force, you will plainly perceive that *all opinion* is generally grounded upon passion and intereſt, and therefore according to your argument all false opinions should be corrected.

Nephew.

Nephew. I think indeed there is a great difference betwixt disputing wildly to and fro with arguments on both sides, which most men use, and taking known and agreed principles and proceeding upon them to draw forth a long thred of science, as me thinks your manner is. For I conceive that if this methode were strickly observed, men would attain to far more knowledg in things necessary to our *well being*, and to a greater Eminence in profitable curiosities.

Uncle. Howsoever, Cosin, I hope you now perceive that this point hath resolved all controversies. For if all disputes betwixt us and others of a different communion be in matters subject to judgment, and that there can be no higher judgment upon earth, for the resolution of such difficulties, than of a General Council, and that we do not refuse Communion to any man, but for matters thus resolved, it evidently follows that all questions betwixt us, and what Church soever of different Communion are already past judgment, and consequently past dispute. For what opinion, I pray, can you have of those, who will not admit, nor be content with any judgment which God hath left upon earth for such matters as they themselves call in doubt? I think both common sense and natural reason will condemn them. But let me ask you one question further. Suppose that some thing be ordered in the Church of God according to the judgment and discretion of *those*, to whom God hath given the power of *government* and *judgment* in such matters, which perhaps of it self might be otherwise ordered without any prejudice to the Church, but *they* thought this way the fittest; now comes others, to whom this charge is not committed, and say 'tis ordered amiss, requiring it may be altered, whether do you think that in this case, this *order* ought to be changed upon their demand and proposition?

Nephew. If those controulers can shew an errour in the *order*, then, me thinks, it were fitting to change it, but if not, then I should absolutely condemn them of disobedience and schism, if they shou'd

should persevere to stand out. And he that should excuse them, were to be suspected as not true to any authority though he profess to acknowledg it.

Uncle. Softly, Cosin, softly there is nothing more frequent amongst men than through passion and oversight to forsake their own principles, and contradict in one matter what themselves confess in another. And therefore although it be true by consequence of reason, that whosoever doth rise against the Church in this kinde, may upon the same ground and principle be false to any other authority, or government, yet upon other reasons, or by not seeing the consequence of his fact, he may likewise be true and faithfull. And therefore it were rashness to condemn, for this reason alone, those truths, which such an one may perhaps maintain in other matters. Howsoever is not our conclusion manifest, that there is no place for *If*, and *Ands* in our case, where there can be no evidence brought against a point of Doctrine, which the highest *Tribunal* and *Judgment* upon earth hath already decreed? But suppose some one or few of these innovatours had *Evidence* on their side, yet the vulgar people, whom they put on to mutiny, cannot have it, no nor any certainty that these their ring-leaders have *Evidence*, being not able to compare understandingly the worth of divers men in a business which surpasseth their capacity. And therefore this common people, in such a case, must needs proceed and do, whatsoever they do upon passion, surprize, or interest. And consequently those *innovatours* who moved, carried, and pressed them thereunto, cannot be excused from being culpable of temerity, obstinacy, and Archi-Rebellion. Yet as a Prince doth sometimes condescend to his Rebellious subjects, that he may gain time, and so bring them to reason, as *Roboam's* wiser Councel thought fit to give ear to the cries of the communities for once, that they might serve him ever after: *So* I doubt not but the Church both may and will relent sometimes a little to establish her Government and good order more strongly

ly another time. Nor is she to be reprehended if contrarywise she be rigerous upon occasions, to wit, when she sees that relenting weakens her authority, and doth rather increase than asswage the mutiny. But what is now and then convenient to be done, that belongs to them who are in place to judg. And, for us to obey, and still suppose they do the best.

Nephew. Hitherto, Uncle, me thinks I am well satisfied, but there is a main difficulty about the diversity of the *Rule of Faith.* I pray, tell me, do you not think

§. 7. *That the maintenance of the unity of the Church is of extreme great necessity.*

FOr we profess, you know, that tradition, or the receit of our Doctrine from Father to Son, is our chief authority, and our prim motive of faith: All others will acknowledg n other rule than their own interpretation o the Scripture. This in my minde is the most important question of all the controversies in Religion, and upon the resolution of this point doth rely and depend all other disputes and difficulties of Christian faith, nay even our being truly and properly Christians or faithfull. For if Christ was a Law-maker, not every one who professeth his name, but who observeth his Law is truly a Christian. And if Christ have set down a certain *rule* or *manner*, and certain *Magistrates*, by whom we are to know this Law, whosoever doth not follow that *rule* and acknowledg those *Magistrates* cannot be said to observe his Law, and consequently profess Christs name wrongfully. *What it is to be a Christian.*

Uncle. Do you think, Cousin, that who doth not observe Christs Law is no Christian? what then shall become of sinners? shall none of them be Christians, nor of the Church of Christ? you will make a Church of onely *Elects* or *Predestinates*, as the Puritans do.

Nephew. It may be I go too far, yet certainly who doth not keep Christs Law, or Profess to keep it, is no Christian. But then me thinks I go too far on the other side, for all those that profess Christs name, do likewise profess to keep his Law, how little soever they do.

Uncle. Why then Cousin, I will help you out, and open the state of the question unto you. First, you must know that this word *Ecclesia* in its primitive sense signifieth a meeting or congregation of men called out of a greater multitude, as a Council or Senate is. And because the first Christians were called in that manner by Christ and his Apostles, *Ego vos elegi de mundo*, therefore we properly and deservedly call the multitude of Christians a *Church*. Now a multitude *called together*, is not onely and simply a multitude, (which may import confusion) but a multitude gathered together and united. If you ask wherein this multitude, we speak of, is united, 'tis known that 'tis to do the will of the caller, who being *Jesus*, (that is, *Saviour* or *Director* to salvation) their calling must be to walk the paths of salvation: And since we have no other Master of our salvation but *Jesus Christ*, 'tis evident that the unity of his Church must consist in the observance of his Law. Secondly, you are to note, that there are two sorts of unities, the one of similitude, the other of connection. We say, all men are of one nature, that's an unity of similitude: we say likewise, all the parts of a man (though dislike in themselves) make one man, there's an unity of connection. Now if the Church of Christ had been to continue onely for his own, or his Apostles time, the former unity would have served. Nay, even now, if all the Christians, who live at this day, *do*, and *perform* the same things, practise the same faith and good life, and use the same Sacraments, This *unity* of similitude would suffice to make the Church of Christ *one* for the present,

What is a Church.

Joh. 15.

Wherein consists the unity of the Church.

present, but could not make it subsist and continue, there being no connection amongst the parts and members of this multitude to make them stick together. Wherefore Christ having planted a multitude of faithfull which he intended should subsist and continue for many ages, no doubt but he hath given them such an *unity* as is necessary for continuance. Thirdly, therefore you must note that there are two sorts of multitudes in this world which subsist and continue, the one natural, as the parts of a living creature, the other moral as the members of communities or Common-wealths, and both have their proportional unities. For the first we see that in plants all the members have a due connection to the root from which being cut off the part dieth for want of continuity. In other living Creatures we likewise finde a heart (or something else that supplies its function) by connection whereunto every part receiveth life and subsistence, and whose passage or communication with that heart being stopped and cut off, the part by little & little fades and dies. For the second subsisting and continuing multitude, we see in all communities or Commonwealths there is a *head Common Council*, or *highest authority*, whereunto all the Members repair in necessity, and by their connection therewith, they receive *security*, *life*, and *motion* in that moral kinde of being, every man doing his duty according to the Laws of that community, and the *head* or *Supreme authority* providing for the observance of the Laws in general, and particularly for the direction of such cases as the Laws reach not unto. So that if you take away this *head* or *common wisdom*, the multitude must of necessity be short lived, and quickly come to ruine. Hence it is evident to common sense and natural reason, that the Church of Christ being a multitude ordained to subsist and continue, must not onely have the *unity of similitude* and be *one* by the similitude of actions which Christ hath prescribed, and all Christians practise; but also by the unity of connection to some common *head* and *Supreme Council*, whereby

it may conserve it self, and keep its subjects in the continuance of the Law of Christ, and in the practise of those actions which he hath commanded. And here you may note, that were this Law natural, there needed no more to be of the Church than to be a member of this community, and he would be out of it, who should not participate of the two unities. But our Christian Law being above nature, and consequently not to be learned by mans judgment, but by authority, (that is, by receiving it from Christ) those who do not receive it by that *means* and *rule* by which Christ hath ordained it shall be received, are not truly of this community, whatsoever be their material belief and opinion. Wherefore you are to consider farther, that this *Receit* of Christs Law and Doctrine may have been ordained by Christ himself to be effected two several ways. First by word of mouth, that is, that this Law and Doctrine should be vocally taught and delivered from hand to hand, from Father to Son to the worlds end: Secondly, by writing. Now therefore if Christ have ordained both these ways, who should not accept of them both, is not truly and properly a Christian, nor consequently of the Christian community. If Christ have onely instituted *tradition* to be the means and rule of the *receit* of his Law and Doctrine, and hath given *Scripture* onely for superabundant instruction and consolation, then who should reject *tradition*, and fly to the *Scripture*, making it his onely *rule* and *means* of *receiving* Christs Law and Doctrine, were not truly and properly a Christian, nor of the Christian commun ty. Lastly, if Christ have ordained *Scripture alone* to be this *rule* and *means*, then who cleaveth to *Tradition* is not truly a Christian. The resolution of this question doth properly belong to the Governours of the Church, who if they have the true rule, their subjects are safe, if not, their subjects souls will be required at their hands by whom they perish.

The want of the true rule of faith excludes from the Church.

But

But I will take another time to give you a full resolution of this main difficulty. In the *interim* you may infer out of this discourse to our present purpose that *three things* are required to make one a legitimate Christian, and such an one, as every Christian ought to be, if he will be truly one of the community and Church of Christ. Though perhaps one may be in some sort a Christian, and go to heaven too, by an extraordinary means, without having all these three subsequent dispositions and qualities. The first is, that he believe and practise the Law of God, which in respect of a particular man is but short, and 'tis in a word, to love God above all things. The second is, that he be united to the multitude of true Christians, that is, that he depend of the Government left and instituted by Christ here upon earth. And for this point or quality, as I doubt not but some one or few may be saved without it, (yea peradventure with an opposition to it in fact through ignorance, so his heart be true and without passion) yet to think this a common, ordinary, and high-way to salvation, and that 'tis as indifferent to live from under this Government settled by Christ, as under it, were ridiculous and absurd in common sense and reason, and indeed it were to annulate Christs coming, and make his Law void and fruitless. And if you desire to conceive the necessity of this point more fully, do but reflect and consider the nature of all civil and political Common-wealths, wherein if any Member do not live under the Governours, and depend of the Magistrates established by the highest power and authority thereof, he cannot be truly and properly said to be a part and Member of that community, nor can be assuredly know (ordinarily speaking) nor constantly perform the Law and orders of it. The third point is, that this community, whereof every particular Christian is to be a share and Member, have the true *rule* and *means* to know and observe the

Three things are required to make a legitimate Christian.

Law of Christ. And it is necessary that this point be more exactly known by those who live amongst diversity of opinions in this matter. For where there appears learned and morally good men taking parts in this question, a private man seems to have just reason to doubt whither side he shall take for his guide, and therefore this point well dicussed amongst such, gives a man full and general satisfaction for his whole belief and practise. And these two last points clear one the other, for that community which hath the true means of the *receit* of Christs Law and Doctrine, that is, the *true rule of faith*, must of necessity be it, of, and *in* which we are to seek, and shall finde, Christs Law: And contrarywise if we finde the true community, we are sure it hath the true *rule* of knowing Christs Law and Doctrine. Hence it is that the Catholick Church ever presses her Adversaries with two special arguments, 1. with the *novelty* of their Church, shewing that none of them ever had a continual visible succession, 2. that they receive not their opinions from their Ancestors, and by them from Christ, but that they were invented at such a time against the received *tenet* of the Church in that time, that is, tradition for the Church, and novelty of Doctrine in her Adversaries. And now I think you see the resolution of our first question.

Nephew. I think I do, and 'tis (if I be not deceived) that such as profess to keep the Law of Christ (though in effect they do not perform it) are to be accounted of the Church, and consequently sinners are not to be excluded, so long as they submit themselves to the Churches Government established by Christ: And on the other side, though divers pretend to Christs Law and Doctrine, yet unless they be joyned and united to that community which hath *this Government*, and *the true rule* to know and continue Christs Law, they cannot (generaly speaking) be saved. But you said one thing which troubles me, to wit, that some may be saved even without

How some may be saved out of the Church.

these

these conditions, which is against our common saying, that there is no salvation out of the Church of God, and therefore you know, we labour to get people reconciled, and united to the Church, even in the hour of their death, which would not be so needfull, if salvation could be had out of the Church.

Uncle. Why cousin, do you not say, that every man hath two Leggs, two Eys, and the like, though some particular men be destitute of both? we say men cannot live without meat, and yet some have lived many years without it. We say men cannot live in the water and yet it is writ, that the *Portugalls* in their discoveries found a man, whose habitation was in the Sea, and came onely to land as *Crocodiles* and *Sea-Calfs* do. So you see we put universal denominations upon the common and general, and that without prejudice to lawfull exceptions of rarities or prodigies. You know there is no general rule but hath an exception: and *Logicians* say, *Ars non curat de accidentibus ac fortuitis.*

Nephew. But I pray you, shew me, why it is a rare accident for a man to be saved out of the Church. For example, if we look into the tenets of our Protestants, I see not, why they may not be said to hold sufficient points of faith both to attain to the love of God, which is the chief path of salvation, but also to live an ordinary and competent good life amongst their Neighbours, which is the compleatness of Gods Law.

Uncle. Were not man a civil and social *animal* that is, to live with others, I should not deny, but a Protestant might more ordinarily be saved. For as you said well, they hold as many tenents with the Catholick Church as be in some sort sufficient for the direction of a private mans life. But God hath commanded every man to have care of his Neighbour, at least so far, as not to hinder him from such things as be necessary to his salvation. And many things being necessary to a multitude, which are not needfull to every particular and private person, he that hinders the multitude from such necessary means and assistance, can never be

ſaved himſelf. As if ſome Province or part of a Common-Wealth ſhould ſtart up and refuſe divers ancient Laws neceſſary for the good and peaceable living of the whole multitude, ſome private men perhaps of this Province might ſo live and behave themſelves as to correſpond and comply with the end and intention of the whole Common-Wealth in virtue of ſome ſuch other Laws and Statutes as might be generally admitted and commonly received by them all, but ſure it is, that the multitude and community of this Province would never reach to this perfection, wanting (as we ſuppoſe) ſeveral Laws and inſtitutions neceſſary for them in common and in general. Now that the Catholicks *tenents*, which the Proteſtants refuſe and contradict, are of this nature, to wit, that they are neceſſary for the multitude, 'tis evident. As Government of the whole Church, and thoſe Laws and Canons which theſe Governours univerſally aſſembled do enact and ordain for the good of the total multitude, and in particular. Praying for the Dead, Praying to Saints, The uſe of Pictures, Sacraments, Ceremonies and the like, which Chriſt, or his Apoſtles, or their ſucceſſours inſtituted for the benefit of the univerſal community and multitude; Amongſt whom there being divers taſtes, one is pleaſed with one thing, another with ſomething elſe. Wherefore the Proteſtants in contradicting theſe points, hinder the multitude of their ſalvation (ſuppoſing theſe things be good and neceſſarily ordained, as we Catholicks ſuppoſe, and as I will ſhew you preſently) and therefore we pronounce generally of the Proteſtants that they cannot be ſaved, though we do not abſolutely exclude every particular man, who through ignorance may (for any thing I know) be excuſed from the guilt of Proteſtancy.

Nephew. I am heartily glad to hear you ſay that ſome may be excuſed, for I ſhall have better hopes of ſome of my deceaſed friends than hitherto I have had. But ſince you are fallen into this diſcourſe, I pray, let me underſtand why the Pro-

Protestants censure us of being uncharitable, when we say, they shall be damned unless they be excused by ignorance? For sure they themselves must needs say as much of us, sithence they accuse us of Idolatry, and other hainous crimes, and consequently they must be as uncharitable as we, or else they will run into a contradition.

Uncle. The mixture of Protestants and Puritants in one Common-wealth hath, and must of necessity draw many into errour, who cannot distinguish which be Protestants which be Puritans, nor whether's Doctrine it is that is urged. For this very blaming of our uncharitableness (which I think is as old as Protestancy it self) sheweth that the true Protestants, have ever been of this opinion, that the disputes betwixt Catholicks and them were but matters of indifferency. I remember when I was a boy there died a virtuous Catholick a Kinsman of mine, and at the same time died a moral honest Protestant, and the Countrey said they were both gone to Heaven, but the one by *Rome* the other by *Geneva*, and so the Papist had the longer journey. And the imputation which the people generally laid upon Catholicks was, that they oppressed men with too great and unnecessary burdens, and forced men to their opinions. And this cannot be otherwise according to the grounds of Protestants, for we *have* all that they have, and more, and in particular we refuse nothing that can be proved by Scripture, which is the main principle of Protestantism, being the onely rule and foundation of their belief, and we damn, as well as they, whosoever will not believe what is evident in the Scripture, onely we stick to what our forefathers have taught us, according to the principles of nature, common sense, and the examples of all the Laws and Common-wealths of the world, untill the contrary be cleared against us. Wherefore Protestants being strongly urged must either say in their heat, that Catholicks can give no probable or apparent answer to those places of the Scripture which they bring and alledg against them, (which must needs be either an ignorant or a

mad mans speech) or else that such questions as are disputed betwixt them and us are of indifferency and not of necessity. Wherefore I believe that those who say that they ought, and may censure us as freely as we censure them smell of *Puritanism*, leaving the Protestants in the main point. Neither is this to answer, but to acknowledg that want of charity which true Protestants object against us, and so condemn themselves. But we Catholicks censure Protestants, first, because they refuse *that*, which we hold to be the true rule of Faith, to wit, the Churches authority, or tradition. And sithence the rule of Faith runs through the whole course of our belief, and is the tenour and principle upon which we hold every particular article, 'tis evident that who doth not accept of this right and true rule of attaining to the knowledg of Christian Faith, cannot believe aright, nor have true Faith but by chance, and therefore will miss it for the most part. Secondly, this rule of ours tells us, that Protestants negative positions are against the general good of the multitude of Christians, that is, against charity, and Gods Law, hindering them from divers important and necessary means conducing to salvation. Lastly, it were meer folly to leave possession upon a slight argument. For as in *equality* the better proof, should carry the cause, the equal divide it, so where there is possession on the one side, there nothing but such conviction as the nature of the cause doth bear, ought to wave possession, otherwise no humane possession would be stable and constant. Now Catholicks are as certain of these two points as that they live and breath, to wit, that they have possession, and that there is no evident conviction hitherto passed and shewed against them. Wherefore I see not why a Protestant should be offended that the Catholicks censure all their Adversaries in general so severely, sithence 'tis manifest, that if they should not do so, they would not onely betray their own principles, but

Why Catholicks censure Protestants so hardly.

but also deny their brethren that fraternal rebuke and admonition, which the Law of God and good neighbourhood requires at the hands of men so perswaded as these grounds force and oblige us to be.

Nephew. Surely then, this is the reason why the Church now and then chastiseth such subjects as rebell in belief against her, which the Protestants so exclaim at.

Uncle. 'Tis so indeed, and being no other Church can have this principle against us, if at any time they persecute us for our faith and belief, they must needs do it more out of passion and revenge, than out of any rational love and knowing zeal to God and Religion. And now, Cousin, I hope you conceive the extreme necessity and main importance of these points which we have talked of, being such as that the Church of God cannot subsist without them, and essential to Christs coming, *to wit*, to establish *some* to have the charge and care of Teaching and governing his Church; and that these Teachers and Governours have great credit and authority, even supernatural and more than humane; And that their judgment in matters of belief and Religion is to stand good, nor may be subjected to the weak and wavering judgment of the Layety, that is of men ignorant in the principles of their science and discipline: And lastly, that being thus united they have the true and right *rule* of knowing Christs Law, and those things which are to be believed and practised. All which you see are of that nature, that the very essence of a Christian Church and community cannot subsist and continue without any of them all; And without such a Church the Generality of mankinde cannot be maintained in charity, nor without charity arrive to eternal Happiness, for which both charity and all these other points are absolutely necessary. This hath been the chain of our discourse hitherto, if you have well understood and conceived my intention. Which likewise you see I have done by the light of common sense and reason, according

to

to my promise; And sithence you would have me to go this way, and neither fly up to sublime metaphysicks, nor drown your memory with tedious allegations of Authours, we will still continue in he same path, insisting in the principles of nature, and shewing that divers points of our Faith and practice, which the Protestants deny, are, even by their conformity to natural reason it self, and by their own proper force and efficacity of causing and producing good and virtuous effects in a Christian Commnnity (and thereby contributing to salvation) are, I say, of no small consequence and importance. First therefore tell me, whether you think there be any other necessity in respect of the points controverted betwixt us and the Protestants, than this absolute and main *one*, which we have already talked of? I mean whether there be not another necessitie, which though not altogether so great in it self, and of its own nature, yet such an one, as is sufficient to make a point of importance, and of such importance as that to reject it, would be a lawfull and just cause to refuse and deny communion to the refractarie and obstinate opposers thereof? And let us put the question thus:

§. 8. *Whether some points may not be of necessity in a lower degree, as in particular the use of Pictures, or Images?*

NEPHEW. I told you before how I thought *necessitie* might be distinguished into an absolute necessitie, and into a necessitie of a means for obtaining the thing we desire with greater ease and conveniency, and you liked well of it. But me thinks it were a hard case to deprive any man of that means and quality, without which he cannot absolutely attain to his end, that others may come to their ends with greater ease and security. And therefore I should think that no other necessitie but an absolute one, were sufficient to deserve excommunication, which I take to be a

be a depriving of a party from *that*, without which he cannot obtain eternal bliss.

Uncle. Why, Cosin, let us suppose that in a Community of one hundred thousand, ninety thousand would never attain to bliss (though absolutely they could) unless the way were made easie, do you think it were fit, or tolerable in any one, or in a dosin, to take away the means whereby the way were facilitated to the rest? Nay, suppose ten thousand of the hundred thousand would arrive to happiness with great pains and labours, were it not better in the Governours eye, who ought to be a common father to them all, to let the tenth part perish, than all the other nine?

Nephew. I confess I see mine oversight, for truly the Church is bound in such a case to proceed with rigour, and the party which will not condescend to help the frailty of their brethren, doth by this very fact deserve to lose the protection of charity, which it wilfully abandons, and in effect such a party hath already put it self out of the secret Community of Gods Church, and the Gonour is onely to perform it in external appearance.

Uncle. And to this, Cosin, that such a party doth wilfully stand out in this manner upon pride and faction to justifie their opinion, and that they trench upon the Goverment ordained by Jesus Christ themselves not being called thereunto, proudly setting themselves in the seat of judgment to determine what's fit and convenient for the whole Christian Community, and strugling to force their opinions upon the Church against the sentence of the Churches Governours, which surely ought to prevail in such a case. Look but into the examples of any political Common-wealth, and see what inequality there is betwixt twelve pence and a mans life, and yet our Laws ordain the loss of life for the stealth of a shilling or thereabouts, not considering the value of the thing stollen, but that such a fact is the breach of publick justice in the Common-wealth, which if it were permitted no man should be Master of his

own. This then being ſuppoſed, I doubt not but you will grant likewiſe that in a Church, *virtue* is to be engendred and conſerved with great care and diligence. And although the ſame things which firſt breed piety and devotion do afterwards conſerve it, yet may there be ſome things more proper for the conſervation than for the breeding of it, and contrariwiſe others more proper for breeding than conſerving it, according as the different ſtate of any thing that grows towards perfection doth require a divers care and attendance. Tell me then, Coſin, how think you is the breeding of *virtue* performed in man-kinde?

How virtue is bred in man.

I mean not the firſt breeding, which is done by inſtruction, but the flouriſhing increaſe of it, and the bringing of it to ſtrength?

Nephew. Sithence virtue is nothing but the love of what is truly good for man, and that we cannot love what we know not, *virtue* muſt needs be chiefly increaſed by clearly ſeeing and often thinking of the *thing* we ought to love, and of ſuch things as belong unto it, and make it appear worthy of love, amongſt which one is, that it be in our power to obtain it. Whereupon I ſee that the breeding of virtue conſiſteth in three things, *often thinking of its object, highly eſteeming of it, and conceiting it to be poſſible.* Which correſpondes to the three ſteps and degrees, you made, of tending to any good. And if theſe three things be well obſerved and performed by any ſociety of men, *virtue* muſt of neceſſity increaſe and flouriſh in that community.

Uncle. I am glad you profit ſo well, and make ſuch good uſe of what I ſay, If now therefore, Coſin, the diſputes and differences which are in particular poſitions betwixt us and Proteſtants, do concern all theſe three points, and that highly, will not you confeſs that they are of great importance? For the firſt you have heard I am ſure, how God Almighty in the old Law would have mens hearts perpetually buſied about his Law, how he would have them to think of it at home and upon the

the high-way, morning and evening, how he would have his commandments bound to their hands, and so ever wagging before their eys, and written upon the Frontispiece of their houses. All which was to signifie that the memory of Gods Law could not be too great, being not sufficient to think of it in the Church onely, or at vacant times from necessary labours, but that our thoughts ought ever to be imployed that way. The like doth the Catholick Church, causing to be erected upon the high-ways in market-places, and in corners of streets sometimes crosses with our Saviours image nailed upon them, sometimes his flagellation, his coronation, his resurrection, his ascention, or some other mystery of our redemption, or pious representation, to put us in minde of what ought to move us to the love of God, which are frequently to be seen in Catholick Countries in every house, in every room, over every door, whereof there be yet some marks in our own Countrey. And can you think that this diligence of our fore-fathers compared to those commands of God Almighty in the old Law, to be over much? Or that the zeal of those who pulled down these memories of Christianity was according to science? Doth not the question of this point clearly concern the increase of virtue, and the Churches Goverment? Surely it doth. For I think no wise and indifferent man can doubt but that Pictures must needs breed many good thoughts which would never have been without them. What true Christian can look upon the representation of any bloudy passage of our Saviours passion, but he will be moved to some good thought or sentiment if he have any feeling of Christianity in him? Or if some be not moved to pious thoughts by such an object, will not many others be? And none can doubt but that from such devout thoughts do naturally proceed and flow many virtuous affections, and these affections do engender perfection, it being their conatural leavings and effect, and this perfection is *that* which saveth our Souls. So that you see some come to salvation, others to a higher

degree of perfection, and consequently of bliss, by the use of pictures. Where by the way you may note that if Pictures have this effect in our Souls, to what degree of reverence and affection will not the blessed Sacrament it self raise them who truly and assuredly believe Christs real, corporal, and substantial presence to be continually in their Churches and upon their Altars? And what a motive of love do *they* take from the Church, who refuse and deny this point.

Nephew. You speak with reason and common sense in my judgment. And indeed the price of *one* Soul is more worth than any temporal good, even of state, nay, even of the whole World, which (besides the pregnant reasons I have heard you give for this point) our Saviour himself doth testifie it in express and plain words. Nevertheless, Uncle, I see it is the course of the World not to esteem of a small part of a great number, but to look onely upon the greatest part. Which whether it be the shortness of our discourse in Goverment, not able to reach to particulars, or whether it be the mutability of nature, not suffering it self to be bound to some one strain though the best and perfectest, which causeth this our unhappiness I know not, but so it is that a small number is not regarded. Which I speak to this purpose, that one might answer your discourse in a word, and say. The good which the use of pictures brings is so small and little, that it is not worthy looking after, and therefore may well be neglected without any great loss. *Matth.* 16.

Uncle. Few words, Cosin, may put a man to a great difficulty, and the rather in this matter because the use of images hath two conditions, the one that it works its effect by little and little, so that the present effect is almost still imperceptible; the other that it is never the immediate nor the sole cause of its effect, but hath ever some other cause joyned with it, which may produce the same effect without it, so

How the use of Pictures work its effect in man.

so that, I say, having these two conditions, it is hard to shew the efficacity of this cause, seeing we can neither proceed by shewing the want of the effect, this cause being substracted, nor by the change of the effect when this cause is put. Nevertheless to give you some light and content in this point, do you remember the Turner whom I was wont to imploy in *London*, how by taking away little shavings, and indeed so small and thin as that you might see through them, he would in a quarter of an hour bring a great and rough stick to be as little and smooth as he desired, which suppose he had been three days a doing, and yet perpetually a working of it, by reason of the matter or quality of the work, he might be said perhaps to have wrought well and hard, though the effect of every particular stroke did not appear.

Nephew. I conceive your meaning already, for as those shavings would be (especially in your supposition) as it were invisible, and a looker on, not seeing where the shavings were heaped together (for there I doubt not but they would be easily seen) would think the workman did onely press and smooth his work, and no way lessen it. So I imagine you will tell me, that the pious affections gained by the use of pictures produce at length a great effect in our Souls, though it be imperceptible in every particular action, and consequently the time imployed therein no less profitable for our end, than the Turners for his.

Uncle. You are in the right, Nephew, onely I will tell you *Aristotle* says, that Poetrie is a painting in words, & although I intend not to compare the force of a picture to the force of Poetry, yet if you knew as well what strong and vehement motions and affections may be, and are produced and imprinted in the peoples Souls in some Countries by meer dumb shews and representations without all life and action, as well I say, as you know the force of our Plays in *London*, you would say there is more truth in *Aristotles* words than every one conceives, and that the effect of pictures and of Poetrie is of the same kinde, and may be

ompared as a ſlow and unready Turner to a quick nd nimble one. And therefore conclude that the effect of pictures is not little, but their operation ſometimes imperceptible.

Nephew. You have ſaid ſo much, that now I have a ſcruple on the contrary ſide, I rather fear that the uſe of pictures ſhould be taken away, leaſt they ſhould work too much, and induce men to Idolatry, conceiting that the very material Images have ſome hidden virtue in them. So I have heard the Emperour of *Conſtantinople* cauſed *ſtatuas* to be taken out of Churches, becauſe ſome Prieſts abuſed them by counterfeiting miracles, and I am told that in ſome Catholick Countries the people will not ſuffer old pictures to be changed into new, nay, that even our Divines attribute I know not what particular aſſiſtance of God to one picture rather than to another. And laſtly that ſome ignorant people having been asked, have profeſſed that a Crucifix was Chriſt, others have ſpoken unto pictures as to living things, and the like.

Uncle. And I have alſo heard that a poor woman being examined upon her death bed about the three perſons of the S. *Trinity*, ſaid, the *ſon* was this great light which brings us day, nor could ſhe be taken off it, having been long deceived by the equivocation of ſound betwixt *Son* and *Sun*, think you therefore, Coſin, that it were fit to take away the preaching of the B. *Trinity* for ſuch errours? I know you do not. In ſuch queſtions we muſt balance the good of the inſtitution with the capacity and likely-hood of errour and harm which may come thereby. For every diſcreet man knows well that mans nature is ſubject to do it ſelf miſchief even by the beſt things. How dull and blockiſh, and how nothing better than the ſtock or ſtone it ſelf which he admires, muſt that man be (if he have but had any indifferent inſtruction in Chriſtianity) who can believe that a piece of Wood or Marble is that *God* & *Man* whom he hath heard preached to have been born, lived, and died upon a Croſs, and now to reign in Heaven? Certes, Coſin, 'tis evident to a wiſe and moderate man that

that the fault is not in the Doctrine, but in the want of instruction, and consequently, *that* were to be mended, not the use of pictures taken away, which do universally good, though some particular harms come by their occasion from another cause. Wherefore the *Greek* Emperour had done more wisely to have punished severely those impostors, than to have taken away such an instrument of devotion. And this same answer may be applied with convenient proportion to those people who are so zealous towards their old pictures. And for Divines opinions I intend not to binde controversies of Religion to their *Quæres*, nor to mingle them in our discourse, the more common this fault is amongst us, the more it is to be avoided. Onely I will add, that any tell you the frequent use of pictures makes them to be of little, or no effect, your answer is ready, that the like may be said as well of those common and continually present means which God Almighty ordained in the old Law to put men in minde of his commandments, as also of any other means how efficacious soever, to wit, preaching, prayer, frequentation of the Sacraments, and the like, if they be commonly used and practized. But to go on in our discourse, what shall we say, Cosin, of

§. 9. *The honouring of Saints, their Canonization, and of the institution of Religious orders, are they likewise necessarie in this same degree?*

WHich that we may discover the better, let us consider the other two parts and conditions, which you told me were necessary for the breeding of virtue, to wit, of esteeming it, and seeing it to be possible.

How the veneration of Saints breeds devotion.

And I pray, what means of making a deeper impression of esteem can there be found than the veneration we give unto Saints? For they being the men who have footed our the steps which we must tread, if we intend

to come to the same rewards, and attain to the same happiness whereunto they are arrived, which is the greatest motive of our virtuous living, can we doubt but the higher conceit we make of the excellencie of their state, the greater and more ardent must needs be our desire, and the stronger our courage to do and perform what they did and practized. The greater esteem the Souldier makes of the quality of a Commander, the more he is ready to perform those actions whereby such honours are to be obtained. And the like in all conditions of the world. Now if you consider wherein consists the honour which we give unto Saints, you shall finde that 'tis chiefly in three things, 1. In keeping their holy days, 2. Reverencing their Relicks and pictures. 3. In hoping good of them by praying unto them. For we naturally think the greatest goods to be in those who deserve honour, and can do good to others, and therefore we never make any great conceit of those things whence we can neither expect any good, nor whereunto we think no honour due.

Saints are honoured three ways.

Nephew. I cannot but interrupt your discourse with admiration to see how men, who surely had not cast away all thoughts of virtue, (hitherto they had so many followers and were in so great esteem) should under slight pretences, so weaken the main strings by which poor men were drawn to Heaven, and that for a little vanity and desire to appear more learned than others. How true is it, Uncle, that man hath no foe but himself? For not all the Tortures & Tyrannies, not all the inundations of waters, and ravagings of fires that can be imagined, could ever have done so much harm to mankinde, as the very taking away of the esteem and conceit which we Catholicks have of the excellencie and greatness of Saints, and of the happy estate which they enjoy, and which is the end we all aim at.

Uncle. Oh! Cosin, if *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, or any of your great glory hunters had considered in their

their life time (what now peradventure to their great grief they cannot be ignorant of) the difference that there is even in this worldly and vain glory betwixt *Peter* the fisherman, or *Paul* the tentmaker, (who never aimed at this honour,) but thought it worse than the dust which they shaked from their shooes) and themselves, who pursued it so keenly with perpetual danger of their lives, wasting their estates and Countries, and ruining their Neighbours, if this, I say, they had then known, would they not have changed their mindes, and followed other courses? And do they not now mauger themselves, and tear their very Souls in pieces, to see their own folly, and their no less witless than graceless ambition? And do you not then think that the holy Church useth in this a most efficacious means to bring men to a vertuous life, being she doth by this Doctrine of honouring and praying to Saints so strongly commend unto us the glory, and bliss, after which we ought to thirst and hope, if we be true Christians?

Nephew. For the two first points I confess you have reason, but for the third I fear you will not come so well off, For the easier it is to obtain any good the more we esteem it ours, and consequently the more heart we have to go about it. And what way can be thought more easie than to make a conceit of Christs goodness, and think that without any pains or deserts on our side he willgive us that great reward according to his own pleasure, more or less purely and onely out of his mercy and goodness without any respect or regard to our works or lives in this World? Where as we Catholicks make the gates of Heaven so narrow, and the paths thereunto so rugged, that we seem rather to deter than exhort men to virtuous lives.

Uncle. If either we, or they could think to come to bliss without good life, I should not wonder at your proposition, for in that case it were the best and onely course to have a great confidence in him whose gift it is, but if Christ hath neither left any such way, nor you, or any understanding man believe that Faith with a wicked and

careleſs life will bring a man to ſalvation, can you think that ſuch an exaggeration of Faith and confidence, and ſuch a diſeſteeming of good works can be a means to perſwade and incite men to ſtick cloſe and perſiſt in virtuous actions, which by all our confeſſions are requiſite and neceſſary to ſalvation? Surely the Catholick Church taketh the ſecurer way, and the reaſon is, becauſe works in the way of merit (that is, done for Gods ſake and with hope of Heaven) cannot be without Faith, but how eaſie it is for a man to perſwade himſelf that he hath much Faith without working, we finde by dayly experience.

Hence it is that the Catholick Church doth move and perſwade us to labour for our eternal happineſs by propoſing unto us the examples of men, as we are, who have made this great conqueſt, in the moſt exact and ſolemn act of Canonization of Saints. And alſo of others who by profeſſing of extraordinary labours make it appear that the way is not ſo hard but that many dayly tread the paths of it, I mean in Religious profeſſions, in which all ſorts of auſterities are dayly practiſed before our eys, which ought not to be derided and ſcorned, as many do. For what power the examples and converſation of good men have, every wiſe man knows. And for examples we ſee that all the dangers of the Sea and wars, that diving into the bottom of the Ocean, and delving to the center of the earth, hanging on ropes and ſcaffolds, and whatſoever man hath invented in this kinde do not deter men, where there is either *profit* or *Admiration*. Let but one deſperate *beginner* ſhew the way, and he will not want multitudes of followers, ſo either vanity or gain ſecond his adventures. And if the force of *Example* be ſo great, the loſs of wanting it muſt needs be equivalent, and conſequently the wrong done to Chriſtians by taking it away muſt be no leſs. And therefore the queſtion and controverſie whether it ſhould be maintained in the Church or no, is of no ſmall importance.

The force of examples in mans life.

Nephew.

Nephew. I perceive well that you still continue (according to your promise) to shew the *necessity* and *importance* of controverted points of Religion by shewing their force and efficacity of producing profitable and advantageous effects for man-kinde attaining and coming to eternal bliss; and I see that this is a very conatural and efficacious proof. But I fear all points of controversies cannot be proved that way. For, I pray, how should any man shew me

§. 10. *That the Sacraments of order and Matrimony, the Generality of Ceremonies, or the opinion of miracles are necessary?*

UNCLE. You remember I proposed unto you but now a division of some things which concerned the breeding, others the conservation of virtue and devotion. For although such things as augment virtue do likewise of necessity conserve it, yet there may be some things which properly are to conserve it, and not to augment it, or at least of two things which do both, the one may conserve it because it breeds it, the other may augment it because it conserves it. Now therefore if we finde any thing whose principal effect is onely to hinder such contrarieties as would destroy piety and devotion, such, properly speaking, do not augment it of themselves, but yet they may be truly said to conserve it. Further, if you consider, you shall finde that this hindering of contrarieties and opposites to virtue is performed two ways. First by removing all such things as put men in fear of yielding to the contrary, which is a kinde of strengthening of mans weakness against these contrarieties. Secondly, by diminishing and asswaging the force & violence of these contrarieties, either in themselves, or in their action. In the first manner do contribute all kinde of *Ceremonies*, and particularly those which are used in the instalements and beginnings of offices

sices and charges, as the Sacraments of *Order* and *Matrimony*. And likewise the opinion of Miracles. For *Ceremonies*, their nature in general is to put in mens heads the conceit of a high and sublime thing, whereby we proceed with greater caution & wariness in the business which we have in hand. And for *Miracles*, the belief and opinion of them once well grounded (as it ought to be) makes the people extremely apprehensive of the presence of Almighty God, and of his immediate goverment of human affairs. So that as to be over credulous of Miracles is the sign of a light and imprudent man (for according to reason the stranger the thing is, the greater ought to be the proof which should make us believe it) so likewise not to think that some Miracles in common have been and are now done in the Catholick Church, were to contradict the universal and constant opinion of all good Christians, and deserves to be suspected of not believing the particular providence of Almighty God; which is the main string whereupon all Christianity and supernatural Religion hangeth, and which all Masters of piety and devotion have ever sought to ground strongly in the hearts and Souls of men.

Nephew. But I pray, Uncle, how will this be true in Matrimony (for that concerns me) the use whereof consists in such a material and sensual pleasure? I have often reflected why the Catholick Church (which makes so great esteem of virginity) should place marriage amongst the Sacraments, and make such great Ceremonies in the administration of it.

Uncle. You speak like a youngster, And I would to God your conceit and thought were not so deeply rooted in the hearts of many young men like your self. The Apostle tells you that the right and lawfull use of the bed is honourable, and that women are to be saved by Τεκνογονία, that is, bringing forth of Children. God Almighty hath bestowed this procreation of children

Why 'tis fit that Matrimony should be a Sacrament Heb 13. 1. Tim. 2.

dren

ſervants, as a chief temporal Bleſſing: ſo we ſee in *Abraham* and in the good women that entertained *Elizeus*; and ſurely it was the firſt Bleſſing that God beſtowed upon his Creatures. If you conſider for what end God ſanctifies any action, you ſhall finde 'tis onely for mans uſe, and then reflect upon the *goods* which follow the lawfull uſe of this material action betwixt man and wife, and you will not wonder that God hath placed a Sacrament in Matrimony. I do not doubt but the light of reaſon tells you, that in reſpect of good œconomie, a mans having but one wife, and his perpetual cohabitation with her, is the beſt manner of ſecular living that can be, both for temporalities ſake, and for having a quiet and contented life. Which ſuppoſed Marriage muſt needs be a matter of great conſideration. For either a man muſt live without a woman, (which kinde of life is but for few) or with this woman after he hath once taken her, And therefore 'tis of great importance that this manner of life of it's own nature be convenient and grateſull. Beſides you know a man takes a great deal of natural content in his wife, generally ſpeaking, (which ſometimes draws him to ſtrange inconveniencies, unleſs his paſſions and affections be well moderated and ſettled) for you know he takes her for his beſt friend, his beſt ſervant, and his deareſt partner in all his buſineſſes, ſuppoſing ſhe be wiſe and prudent, and conſequently ever complying in reaſon with her husbands humour. Whereby you ſee that the making of a Marriage, and the uſage of it when 'tis made, is the Pin whereon doth hang the chief content and ſweetneſs of a married mans life, the good of his poſterity, the main ſucceſs and proſperity of his temporal eſtate or fortunes, and above all the breeding of his children, and the inſtilling of piety and virtue into their tender hearts, which may grow with their age and carry them to felicity. Judge now, Coſin, whether it was not convenient and fitting that in the law of grace this action ſhould be elevated, and ranked in the

higheſt degree and order of thoſe actions, which God hath ſanctified for the uſe of man. And ought we not to commend and prefer the wiſdoms of our forefathers before all other nations for making ſo great eſteem of it, and celebrating it with ſuch great ceremonies?

Nephew. Truly I am to thank you for this good leſſon, becauſe it may be of ſpecial uſe for my ſelf, and I could wiſh it were given to all men before they marry. For my ſelf, I thank God, I am ſo well ſped, that I need not wiſh to have learned it ſooner. But I pray, Uncle, let me know the other part of your diviſion, that is, Which be thoſe things you ſaid were neceſſary to break the force of contrarieties and temptations againſt virtue, and which might comfort and ſtrengthen men in this diſtreſs? I do imagine you aim at ſome things which you will hardly prove. As for example, Do you think that for this end,

§. 11. *Praying for the Dead, Extreme unction, and Confeſſion are neceſſarie?*

Uncle. SEtting aſide the temptations of ſenſual pleaſure, which we ſuppoſe to be moderated by marriage, there remains fear and grief. Fear is chiefly of Death and Judgement following. Grief is of loſs, which to rational men is, above all other things, of friends, of whom the chiefeſt is Almighty God, who is loſt by ſin; the next is of temporal friends, who are principally loſt by their death. This laſt is taken away by the belief of their ſurviving, and that once we ſhall enjoy them again.

How Prayers for the Dead do appeaſe the grief of the living.

Whence proceeds the deſire of continuing amity and communication with them, which being onely to be had by the mediation of Almighty God, it cannot be performed but by praying for them, if we think they ſtand in need. And ſo a great part of this grief is taken away amongſt Catholicks by the diverſion

version of care to get prayers said for them, and another part turned to Almighty God by hoping good for them at his hands. Whereas others give their friends over in death with a Farewell Frost, or else are plunged in uncurable sorrow for an uncurable loss, for the belief of enjoying them again, when there is no communication; in the interim is but cold comfort, and sinks not deeply, as things far from us do generally little move us. The fear of death is much moderated by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. The assistance which virtuous Parish-Priests afford to the poor languishing Patient by the Administration of this Sacrament, comforting him, and praying for him, according to S. *James* his command and the Churches practise, must needs be of great consequence in such an Exigent. Nay what comfort so little, which in this period of distress and last moment of Deaths agony is not great? It was not surely without mystery (said a great Patern of perfection even in our age) that our Saviour *Jesus Christ* would have his Apostles accompany him and pray with him in that dolorous Agony, which he passed in the Garden of *Gethsemani*, and how much he desired it doth sufficiently appear by his twice going to them to see how they performed their charge, and by his exprobration to S. *Peter*. Now there resteth onely to seek a remedy for a conscience loaden with sin, which how great a torture it is of it self, you may easily imagine by the expression and apprehension which the Heathens had of it, who were perswaded that devils or furies did stand continually with burning torches before wicked mens eys, and that the Ghosts of murdered persons did haunt the murderers untill they brought them to madness or some mischief.

How Extreme Unction doth moderate the fear of death. Jac. 5.

Gregory Lopes.

And we are taught both by nature

How Confession is grounded on nature, and what comfort it brings to a sinner.

and experience, that the best and onely remedy to a soul loaden with a secret grief, is, to disclose her case, and the cause thereof, to some faithfull friend, who may afford her comfort and assistance. For this end did our Saviour *Jesus Christ* institute the Sacrament of *Penance*, with the priviledge of silence not violable at any rate, no nor God nor mans Law can exact in any case the revealing of this secret, what damage soever were to come of it. Which let but any impartial and understanding man consider, and then let him judg of what profit and commodity it is to a multitude of men, (not rained down from Heaven impeccable, but framed like Scarabees of the Dung of the Earth, and thereby full of imperfection and weakness) to have by order of Law some selected persons of learning and discretion, unquestionable of what they shall hear, and extremely to be punished if they speak the least word of what shall come to their knowledg by this means, set to comfort and direct them for the amendment of their lives, and on whom they may confidently rely for Counsel, and open the truth of their cause. He knows not what a friend is worth, who knows not how great a benefit this is.

Nephew. I easily believe, (and I think every indifferent man must needs believe the same) that the practice and execution of this point alone would make so great a change in the peoples behaviour, (if it were as well performed as it may, and ought to be) that hence onely it would be clear and evident *that Religion* to be better in which this were practised, and *that*, *the worse* which refused it. But I wonder, Uncle, that all this while you have said nothing of that famous question of communicating under both kindes, which so many very moderate Protestants stand upon as a chief stumbling block which offendeth them.

Uncle. That's a point, Nephew, in which the affirmative part belongs to them, and therefore it behoves them to shew the utility or necessity of communicating in both kindes. Which if they

they cannot do, and that we know God gives us no Laws but for our good and profit, a discreet man will easily, and may justly presume that Almighty God never commanded it, but left it to discretion. And for them to bring any evident proof of a positive command (sithence the contrary hath been practised in some Churches and to some persons (as children) in all ages) I think it never was nor can be done. These points are sufficient to shew that it is not out of obstinacy, or vainglory that the Catholick Church maintains her positions, and forbids communion to Protestants, but forced thereunto by great necessity and true grounds of Government, without which no community can subsist. For if every point may be thus shewed to be of no small importance for the increase of virtue, as it may be, (according as you see by these we have talked of) how much more doth the bulk of all together make a Schisme deserving to be lopped from the tree of life? But chiefly that head-strong, the taking bit in the teeth, and that unbridled ranging in matters of consequence without any respect and aw of the power and authority ordained by *Jesus Christ*, or any reverence to their forefathers or present Government, the ready way and common maxime of all Sedition and Rebellion in what Community or Common-wealth soever either spiritual or temporal, which we see do ordinarily follow, when such Archi-revolters begin to feel their party strong.

Why communicating under both kinds was not commanded.

Nephew. This your last consequence touches, me thinks, a point which I have a great desire to hear well discussed, to wit, of the Popes authority, which you know our Protestants pretend to be a great inconvenience in all political Government.

Uncle. The old phrase permits not the Shoomaker to judg of any thing above the shoo, nor am I willing to meddle in this point or determine what is convenient or inconvenient of the Popes authority in respect of secular Governments. For

being not skilfull in this matter, and discoursing onely, as you see, by common sense, I might perhaps offend, though blameless, in venturing beyond my skill, which would be imputed to the weakness of my cause. Onely, this I know, I must and will honour the Pope as S. *Peter's* Successour, and Head of *Christ* his Church upon earth. Which authority I am sure was never instituted, nor doth it tend, of its own nature, to the detriment or prejudice of any lawfull Government of what quality soever. And if those were present, who, perhaps as ignorant as my self in the Rules of Government, object so many things against this authority, I durst undertake to answer and satisfie them all.

Nephew. Though you will not be pleased to meddle in this point, yet can you not refuse to teach me how to answer the ordinary objections which are made against our Religion. Which if I could solidly perform, I should make it clear and evident,

§. 12. *That good institutions are not to be given over for small inconveniencies, that the Abuses are to be mended, not the things taken away, and therefore that the party which broke communion is to return to the other.*

WHerefore, I pray Uncle, tell me what shall I say to them who cast in our teeth that the Catholick Clergies being unmarried fils the world with whoredom and adultety. That the Riches of the Clergy deprives Commonwealths of the use of a great part of their Countrey, by reason of their immunities. That the Clergies strength is able to bandy now and then against the State. Nay, that a Religious Order, especially such an one as hath great power over its subjects, is able, and not unpractised, to bandy and

and make good its part against both Church and State, with no small dammage and danger to them both, if that they were not prevented. These things must needs avert any State, much more a schismatical one, from our Religion, sithence we suppose them to be of necessity.

Uncle. As for the Clergies chastity every one knows we confess 'tis not a matter of necessity by the Law of *Christ*; yet that 'tis most fit and convenient, I think, no wise man can doubt. For of all pleasures the carnal doth most affect sensible nature, and produceth the greatest extremities of passion in man, and consequently is the greatest binder of man to earthly things, and the greatest hinderer from heavenly and spiritual thoughts that nature hath placed in man. It were needless to tell you how unfit this sensual imployment is for those men, whose main life and action ought to be in preaching and teaching celestial and supernatural doctrine, and whose aim, even by their function and profession, is to draw people from this clod of earth, and elevate their mindes to God and spiritual affections. From wedlock follows the love of wife and children, and the necessary cares of houshold, (which the Apostle calls the afflictions or tribulations of the flesh) And from them the evil Government of the Church, which either must be hereditary, or neglected, the decessour ever striving to leave nothing to his successour which himself can make use of for the better providing of his children. And lastly, the very conceit of chastity and the solitude or loneness of an unmarried man, breedeth an apprehension of the person, in whom they are, whereby the people are much better governed by such an one. Nor is Celibate the cause of such disorders, as truly are found in some places too frequent, but the multiplication of Priests. Which indeed brings this sacred

How the Clergies chastity and single life is convenient.

1 *Cor.* 7.

Why there should be but few Priests in the Church.

function into contempt amongst the Laity (whose Tutors and Teachers Priests are by *Christ's* institution) and maketh them esteemed as servants. And this also makes the Priests themselves to have a less conceit of their own dignity and duty, whereby they become careless of their honour and carriage. And to say the truth considering the difficulty of chastity in the frailty of man's nature, 'tis not likely that whole multitudes of men living in liberty and perpetual occasions of falling, should observe so hard a Rule as is expressed by *Qui potest capere capiat.* Wherefore not the Ecclesiastical command of chastity (which you see is good and necessary for the Government of the Church) but the multiplication of Priests (especially of young and unworthy ones) ought to be taken away, and so the scandal would cease. *Manh.* 19

Nephew. You say well, but I have heard that multitudes of Priests are requisite for the magnificence of the Church, for the convenient hearing of Mass, especially on Holy-days, and for the better Administration of the Sacraments, and helping both of living and dead by the inestimable sacrifice of the Altar, which causeth many to take Priesthood meerly out of devotion.

Uncle. I have heard many say so too, but they did not consider that the necessity of Government and instruction is the chief necessity of the Church, and that the Clergy is made and instituted for this Government (having the Administration of the Sacraments purposely reserved unto them to procure them veneration and authority for the better performance thereof) and therefore not any one ought to be made Priest, but for this end, to wit, for the necessity of instruction and Government. And this Bishops ought to take care of, nor to bestow Priesthood but where the man's creation is necessary for his flock, and then Priests would live better, and be more honored. This was the practise of the Primitive Church, untill the ambition of Deacons (who had the Temporalities of the Church in their hands) made

made them desire honour, and so were made Priests. And the like ambition I believe was the inventour of those fair Reasons which we alleadge, for well may it be magnificence in a Prince to have many servants, but to have many chief Heads and Governours, that must needs lessen their esteem. And for hearing of Masses, if the people be well ordered and governed, few Priests will suffice, nor is the inconvenience so great as the multiplicity of Priests. And the like may be said for the administration of the Sacraments, and for the helping of both living and dead by the holy sacrifice of the Altar. As for those who desire to be Priests out of devotion, I think their devotion would be more conformable to the piety of our forefathers, if they did rather shun than desire Priesthood, especially where there are so many already. And as in my opinion there cannot be an outward work of greater piety and charity than to provide the people of fit Instructours and Governours, nor Alms better imployed than to procure this effect. So contrariwise I think there cannot be an act of greater sacriledg and impiety, than to *order* and imploy unworthy subjects in this kinde, and whosoever out of faction, friendship, or carelesness should do it are worse than Adulterers, Murderers, or those whose sins cry to Heaven for vengeance. But this I speak onely of mine own opinion.

Nephew. Truly, Uncle, I think you are in the right, though peradventure there be not many of your minde. For I see well enough, that as to multiply unworthy Judges and Governours in a Common-wealth were to ruine it, so likewise to multiply unworthy Priests is to hazard the spiritual good of Christianity, and to make an unworthy Parish Priest is in a manner to damn the Parish.

Uncle. For your second objection of the Clergies Riches, though I am none of those that think the Clergy, or any other spiritual company whom they affect, can be too rich, yet I see no such inconvenience in their Riches but 'tis easily

remedied. For in all Catholick Countries there be means found out to diminish their Riches, and make them contribute to the necessities of the State and Common-wealth as fully as others in proportion, though in an honourable way, as to let them have their own Collectours of the Moneys required at their hands. Besides the Clergy not making any vow or profession of renouncing either Riches or Honour, and bearing the greatest charge and office in the Common-wealth, 'tis both fitting and necessary that they have so much wealth as is requisite for the due performance of their function, as, first to be out of solicitude for covenient maintenance. Secondly, to have an equal conversation with their subjects. Thirdly, to give example of the due and true use of wealth. And fourthly, to breed a convenient respect of their quality and persons in those whom they are to govern by their perswasions and authority. And by these Rules it may be easily known when the Clergies Rithes are excessive. You will say perhaps that the Clergies authority ought to be grounded upon their learning, wisdom, and chiefly upon their virtue. And 'tis true, but those whom they are to guide and direct having not (for the most part) eys to see and judg clearly of such internal qualities, but generally esteem of the inward man by the outward appearance, 'tis likewise necessary that they have those exteriour helps. For your third and last objection I could quit my self in a word, and tell you, I intend not to justifie the practice of any, but onely the *tenets* of the Catholick Church. And if at any time either Clergy or Religious should bandy against the State or Common-wealth, it were the fault of the men and not of the Institution, in which case God hath left means to curb and punish them: for the Clergy being an essential and principal part of the Common-wealth, as well

That the Clergies Riches are no prejudice to the temporal State.

Why the Clergy ought to have wealth besides virtue.

well as either the Nobility or Commons, 'tis the ſame caſe for all three. And ſuch an act were to be imputed to the weakneſs of mans nature as well in the Clergy as in the other two. And ſo I hope you are now content for this point.

Nephew. I am for the Clergy, and ſee you have reaſon, but for Religious Orders 'tis not the ſame caſe, for neither is there the like neceſſity of them as of the Clergy, nor are they any publick part of the Common-wealth, but onely private inſtitutions within it. Beſides I have heard wiſe and experienced men ſay, that Religious obedience is eaſily turned into an inſtrument of faction. For their ſubjects being bound under pain of damnation to obey their ſuperiour in any thing that is not manifeſtly ſin, it gives the ſuperiour a mighty command over the whole body (ſpecially if it be purely monarchical, and that one man govern all) and thereby a main power to ſway great multitudes at his will and pleaſure. And I heard not long ago an able man, (who hath been imployed of late by our State in Catholick Countries) ſay, that Princes ſometimes were vehemently afraid of their puiſſant combination, and held it no ſmall point of policy to imploy and engage Religious Orders in their intereſts of State. Whereas for the Clergy they feared them not, having no ſuch obligation of obedience amongſt them, but onely according to the *Canons*, nor any dangerous dependence of forreign States, but every man for himſelf, and therefore unable to do the State any great either ſervice or prejudice by any factious intelligence abroad.

Uncle. Lord! Coſin, how different is the truth from the common opinion of the world. The truth is, Coſin, Religious men are governed by Vows and Rules or Conſtitutions, their Vows make them Religious, their Rules are directions for their living in peace and virtue. Their vow of obedience, which you ſpeak of, reacheth onely to the ſpiritual education and progreſs of their ſubjects; their Rules are for the reſt. If their Vows did reach to their temporal go-

government, then I confeſs they were no Religious Vows, but were to be ſuſpected of factious combinations, and both Church and State might and would be jealous of them, but 'tis not ſo, and therefore they are laudable, and no ways hurtfull in a Common wealth. And for the Religious mans Rule, which onely, and not his Vow bindes him to all temporal ſubjection, 'tis of no great importance, nay ſome of them profeſs that their Rule obligeth not in conſcience (as the Canon and Civil Law doth) no not under a venial ſin. Wherefore you ſee 'tis far from Catholick Religion to patronize any banding againſt either Church or State, and ſo far that every Divine will tell you, that obedience in ſuch a caſe is damnable both to the commander and obeyer. Nay they will tell you that if any Religious Order were come to the height of ambition (which God forbid) as to bend their aims and endeavours generally to the prejudice of the Church or State, ſeeking to ruine the ancient and lawfull government of either of them, to ſet up their own, that in ſuch a caſe it were a ſin to enter into any ſuch Order, and that the Vows of ſuch as ſhould be already profeſſed therein would not oblige them to obedience, nor could ſuch an Inſtitute be truly eſteemed a Religious Inſtitute. And now I hope you are fully ſatisfied. I know there be divers Objections beſides theſe which you produce, but either they pitch upon abuſes inſtead of uſes, as theſe do, or elſe they aim to take away the ſubſtance of a *thing*, becauſe of ſome accidental harms which fall out in the uſe and practice of it. As if one ſhould forbid iron tools by reaſon ſometimes there happens miſchief by them, not weighing the utility with the harm. Wherefore the Proteſtants, whatſoevever they hold, and ſay that they do not condemn Catholicks (which according to their Rule of the *Errability* of all men, and of the liberty they aſſume unto themſelves they are bound to do) yet in effect and in practice they do it, and muſt needs, or elſe deſert their pretences and diſputes with the Catholick Church,

Church at the very beginning. For example, if *Luther* or *Calvin* were urged, Is the use of reverencing Pictures Idolatry or no? They must of necessity answer Yes, or else they are convinced to break from the present Church (whereof they are yet a part) without a sufficient cause. If they be farther pressed, Can you evidently convince that 'tis Idolatry? or, may it probably be maintained that 'tis not? If they acknowledg they cannot, then they are oppressed again. If it be but peradventure yes, peradventure no, why do you make a schisme and division in the Church, and not submit your selves to the belief of your forefathers, and of the present universal Church? If they reply, that when neither part is certain, then each one may hold what he thinks fit. You urge them again, Is this your Reply certain? Can you convince it evidently? or is it but onely probable? if onely probable, they are still in the same snare; if certain and evident, they might have said so of the first propolition. But indeed it were against common sense, and too ridiculous for any private man to undertake to make an evident conviction & demonstration against the general belief of the universal Church for so many ages. And thus you see that these men, who cannot convince any thing against the *Arrians*, *Nestorians*, *Pelagians*, *Berengarians*, and the like, (though condemned many years ago by the Catholick Church) and think all probable that a company of learned and indifferent men have doubted of, yea, use this for a maxime, that such points must of necessity be doubted of, as being not within the reach of evident conviction. Let but (I say) these men come to write against Catholicks, and you shall have them pretend whole lists of demonstrations, and whole pages will not suffice to reckon up the absurdities which they imagine do follow out of some one Catholick point, so necessary it is that these men contradict themselves, who contradict the truth of *Christ* and his Church.

Nephew. Your argument, me thinks, is good against the first beginners of the breach from the

Catholick Church, but will not ſuffice againſt men that now live, who ſeem to be a framed and ſettled Church, and have received this doctrine from their fathers. For we ſee that poſſeſſion, though at the firſt unlawfully gotten, doth in time prevail, and quarrels ceaſe, even where Princes are pretenders. If the *Welchmen* ſhould now pretend to have been unjuſtly put out of *England* by the *Saxons*, the *Romans* out of *France* by the *French*, the *Greeks* out of *Italy* by the *Goths*, who would think their quarrels juſt? So likewiſe, why ſhould the Proteſtants (though their time be not ſo long, not their poſſeſſion ſo quiet) rather yield to the Church of *Rome*, than the Church of *Rome* to them, or to the Church of *England*, for example, unleſs the Church of *Rome* can demonſtrate her poſitions againſt the Proteſtants, which I have not heard any of our learned men ſay ſhe can?

Why the Proteſtants ought to return to the Church of Rome.

Uncle. Although it be both reaſonable in all likelihood, and peradventure may be convinced, that who firſt parted and made the diviſion ought in law of good government to return. And although I could likewiſe pretend, that the Church of *England* compared to that Church which liveth in community with the Church of *Rome* is but a ſmall part, and therefore bound to yield to the greater, (for to ſay that the Proteſtants of *England* live in community with all other Churches, but the *Roman* is manifeſtly falſe, ſince all other Churches will anathematize divers of their *tenets*, and they alſo the *tenets* of other Churches, nor is there any Rule of unity and communion amongſt them) although (I ſay) I could urge theſe and other Reaſons to this effect, yet I will onely propoſe you two. The former ſhall plainly ſhew that the Catholick Church cannot yield unto Proteſtants without eſſentially ruining her ſelf, and therefore no poſſible union betwixt the Churches,

The Catholick Church cannot come to the Proſtants.

unleſs

unleſs the Proteſtants will bend. For if the Catholick Church doth eſſentially ſubſiſt and maintain her ſelf upon this principle and ground, that ſhe hath received her Doctrine from *Jeſus Chriſt* by word of mouth, and ſucceſſion from hand to hand which cannot fail; put the caſe ſhe yields to the Church of *England* in any point, which ſhe holdeth upon this principle, is it not evident that ſhe muſt of neceſſity forgo her hold, and forſake her onely principle whereupon is built all her faith and belief? Is it not manifeſt that ſhe may as well forſake all, as any one point which ſhe holdeth upon this tenour and motive? ſure it is. But the Proteſtants holding their Doctrine and Poſitions upon no ſuch tie, but onely upon their own (as moſt probable) interpretation of the Scripture, which they may change upon better conſideration, are upon far eaſier terms to yield, and that without prejudice to their Religion or judgment. Becauſe *tenets* onely holden upon probability may be changed upon any good occaſion or new known motive without diſparagement to the Authour. And certainly what Church ſoever doth not think her ſelf *unerrable* in any point, what ſhe holdeth may be falſe, and therefore it were temerity for ſuch a Church to hold any point certainly true. And if ſhe hold not any point certainly true, why ſhould not the very Reaſons of State and intereſt ſeek to have them changed and ſettled ſecure and infallible, ſithence humane nature is ever inclined to believe what's for her own profit. The ſecond Reaſon doth prove that the Proteſtant is bound in nature, and by the light of reaſon to yield to the Catholick communion. For if nature teach us that a Proteſtants practiſe ought not to contradict his principles and judgment of his reaſon, and that the neceſſity and force of experience doth convince moſt evidently, that there is no Government in a Church without preſcribing of ſome *tenets*, and forbidding of others, (reſtraining or puniſhing, if need be, ſuch as will not comply with thoſe preſcribed Canons or Articles) And that 'tis likewiſe evident that this is contrary to

the liberty of opinion which the Protestant puts for his first and chief maxime to approve his separation from the *Roman* Church; will it not follow without contradiction, that either the Protestants must break with Reason and the Nature of man, in holding liberty in their judgments and understandings, and obliging to obedience in their will and practice; or else they must close with the Catholick Church in their judgments, and profess the *inerrability* of the Church, at least so far as obligeth her subjects not to withstand or oppose, but to submit and obey her Canons and commands. And for your examples of politick States, which by possession and prescription have at length obtained right, you must remember that all their beginnings and grounds are upon humane nature, and consent of men, and therefore by the same law by which they were made, they may be likewise altered. But the Church of God was made by *Christ* and his Ministers, and therefore Reason tells us, that her institution is to be inviolably conserved, nor ought, or can any prescription of time prevail against her. Wherefore hithence that Church which the Protestants parted from, held, and holdeth still, that the Church of God neither is nor can be but *one* in all ages and places, (which Position she professeth to have received in the same manner and upon the same ground as she hath received the rest of her Doctrine) they Protestants must of necessity first shew that they are the true Church of *Christ*, before they can plead Possession or Prescription. For if there can be but one Church, no Prescription can make them that *one*, hithence at their very beginning and ever since, another both was and is in more quiet possession than they, and pleads the same Title more strongly.

Nephew. Why then, Uncle, I see there remaineth no other question, but whether the Protestants can convince their Positions or no? Which I believe would be a hard task. Wherefore, Uncle, I thank you heartily for this good Lesson, It grows late, I fear I shall hold you up too

too long, 'tis time for you to take your rest.

Uncle. 'Tis true, Nephew, they ought indeed to convince and demonstrate their *tenets*, and I know of no other way they have to do it but by the Scripture, which we do not hold to be sufficient to determine Controversies without tradition. So that I have no more to say to you, but wish you may begin this new year with a good nights rest, which God send us both.

DIALOGUE II.

Whether Scripture alone is fit and able to decide Controversies in Religion?

This Dialogue containeth fifteen Parts or Paragraphs.

1. *The Preface or Introduction.*
2. *That Tradition for Scripture is not of as great force, as for points of Doctrine.*
3. *That Tradition for Scripture is not more universal than Tradition for Doctrine.*
4. *That it is impossible the Text of Scripture should have remained incorrupted.*
5. *What uncertainty the errours of Writers and Copists hath bred in Scriptures?*
6. *What uncertainty the multiplicity of Translations hath bred in Scripture?*
7. *That the very repeating and reciting of anothers words breedeth a variety and uncertainty.*
8. *The uncertainty of Equivocation which of necessity is incident in all Writings.*
9. *That there riseth an uncertainty out of this, that the Scripture was written in Languages now ceased.*

10. The *uncertainty which followeth the particular Languages of Hebrew and Greek, wherein the Scripture was written.*

11. *That the nature of the Books of Scripture is not fitting for the deciding of Controversies.*

12. *Two manners of judging of* Religion *out of Scripture.*

13. *How Scripture doth determine Controversies.*

14. *What Laws are requisite for disputation out of Scripture?*

15. *Of another manner of disputing out of Scripture.*

The

DIALOGUE II.

§. 1. *The Introduction.*

Uncle.

HOw now, Cosin, What makes you so early this morning? Could you not sleep this last night?

Nepbew. Yes, indifferent well, I thank God, but 'tis not very early. Howsoever if I be troublesome I will expect your better leasure, for I am come onely to tell you a scruple that I had yesternight, which hath tormented me ever since; and it is, that we Catholicks, who bear so great reverence and veneration to the holy Scripture, receive more of it than others, write infinite Volumes of Commentaries upon it (as *Paul's* Church-yard can witness) and are so exact to improve our selves (I mean our learned men) in the knowledg of it, should nevertheless, when we come to joyn in the main point, that is, to the decision of Controversies in Religion, seem to fly off, and recur to other Judges, though we acknowledg it to be *Christs* own Word and Law. And now I have told you my difficulty, I will leave you to your better imployments, knowing how much you esteem, and how precious you account your mornings, and therefore I will make bold to call for your answer another time.

Uncle. Nay, stay Cosin, God forbid I should think I could better imploy my time than in giving you satisfaction in a question of such importance, or that you should be importune unto me by desiring the knowledg of a thing so necessary and so beseeming you. I were to blame if I would not

leave even my Prayers to assist you in this point, and perhaps another time you will not be so earnest on it. Although I must confess I am somewhat unwilling to dive into this question, for I see by experience, that the one part seeketh by all means to destroy the authority of Gods Church, and the other seemeth to lessen the power of Scripture for the deciding of Controversies, so that indifferent men, and as yet unsettled, be left as it were without all means of coming to the truth. Howsoever necessity excuseth us; for were our Adversaries able to perform what they promise, that is, to resolve points of Controversies by Scripture, we were worse than beasts if we should refuse to be judged thereby. But if to stand to Scripture onely, as they do, be but a plausible way to Atheisme, and so the question will onely be, whether we must rely upon a Church or be Atheists, (for we think by Scripture alone, left without the guard of the Church, nothing or at least not enough for the salvation of mankinde, can be sufficiently proved) then every man will see that we are forced by Reason and Religion to make evident and known, as far as we can, the necessity of relying upon a Church, and to use all our power to perswade men thereunto. And if you remember we said yesternight that Christian Religion, or the Law of *Jesus Christ*, cannot be learned by wit and study, but by authority, and by receiving it from *Jesus Christ*; and that we said likewise, that he is no true Christian, nor truly of the community of Christians (whatsoever be his material belief) who doth not accept of that Rule and means which *Jesus Christ* hath left and ordained for the receipt of his Law (and the like of him who should follow any other Rule) which must either needs be Scripture, or Tradition, or both, it, will therefore evidently follow that either we must be no Christians, or accept and acknowledg Tradition to be this Rule, if we can shew that the Scripture is not fit, nor hath the conditions requisite for the deciding of Controversies, nor was made or left to the Church for this end.

Nephew.

Nephew. The greater is the neceſſity of this queſtion, the more glad am I that I have moved it, though me thinks I my ſelf might well ſee it is not fit to make the Scripture judg of Controverſies, becauſe we finde by experience, that after ſo many diſputations, and ſo many Books written on either ſide, there is nothing reſolved, nor are we the nearer an end, and therefore 'tis evident that Scripture alone will never decide and determine our quarrels and diſputes.

Uncle. Well, Coſin, ſince you will have it ſo, our firſt queſtion ſhall be

§. 2. *Whether Tradition for Scripture be of as great force as it is for Points of Doctrine?*

AND firſt I pray you tell me, do you think that the Apoſtles, when they went about the world to preach *Chriſt Jeſus*, carried with them all the books of the *old* and *new Teſtament*, either ready tranſlated into the Languages of the People whom they preached unto, or elſe cauſed them to be tranſlated by the firſt Chriſtians?

Nephew. I never thought of this queſtion before, but I ſee well enough that they could not carry all with them, for ſome parts certainly were not made when they went to preach, nay, I am not aſſured whether any part of the *new Teſtament* was made before their diſperſion from *Jeruſalem*, ſo that well may they have carried the *old Teſtament* with them, if they thought it fitting, but for the *new*, they could not, if I be not miſtaken.

Uncle. It is very true. I will tell you therefore, Coſin, how the Authority of the Scripture, that is, of the *new Teſtament*, came into the Church. An Apoſtle or Diſciple, writing a Book or Epiſtle, communicated it to that Church or Countrey wherein he preached, or to which he writ it, that

How the New Teſtament was propagated.

Church

Church communicated it to their neighbours, as the work of such an Apostle, so by little and little it grew from one Countrey to another untill it was spread over the whole Christian world. So that some Countries had not the *new Testament* compleat, (that is, all the Books of it) for a long time. Wherefore no wonder that some have doubted of several parts thereof, being not able to aver, as not assured (by reason of some accident) that such books were truly the Works of such an Apostle or Disciple, which notwithstanding, better intelligence being gotten might be afterwards received for Scripture.

Why the Canon of Scripture is chiefly to be had from ROME.

And here you may note by the way, that the *Roman* Church is that Church to which in reason we ought to give most credit touching the Canon of the Scripture. For *Rome* being at that time (that is, at least for the first three hundred years) to the Christian world, or rather to all the Christians dispersed in divers parts of the world, as *London* is to *England*; and that we see the collection of things estimable, dispersed in several Provinces of our Kingdom, is sooner and better made in *London* than in any other part of our Countrey, it must needs follow, that the collection of the holy Scripture, or *new Testament*, was more exactly faisable at *Rome* than at any other place. But this by the way. For my aim is to make you Judg, whether any one substantial point, which the Apostles with common consent preach'd through the whole world, compared to any one book of the *new Testament* which soever you think first or best received, whether, I say, of these two have descended unto us with more certainty, the one to be the Apostles doctrine, the other to be such an Apostles book?

The state of the question.

Nephew. I should distinguish your question, for either it may be compared to that particular Province or Church where the Apostle himself delivered it both in word and writing, or to the whole

whole Church. And I confeſs that in reſpect of the whole Church, that Point of Doctrine, which is every where preached, muſt needs have more certainty: but where both are equally delivered by the ſame Apoſtle to the ſame Church, I ſhould think the Work ſhould have more authority than the Word. For 'tis an eaſie matter to let ſlip a word ſometimes; whereas writing requireth a more ſettled conſideration.

Uncle. If the queſtion be but of a particular Church or Province, I doubt it will not be ſufficient to give us a firm authority for either one or the other, unleſs we add more circumſtances than we have declared. And the reaſon is, becauſe one Province may have had Religion ſo ruinated in it by the incurſion of infidels, that recovering themſelves after a long time, they may as well miſtake one Book for another, as one Doctrine for another, and ſo this Point is not much to our purpoſe. Although even in this caſe the Doctrine taught by word of mouth hath theſe advantages. That it is delivered to many, the book to few, or in ſome one place. The Doctrine heard and underſtood by many, the book onely to ſuch as can reade, nor to all them neither, but to ſuch as are carefull. The book belongs not much to the practice of the multitude, the Doctrine governs their whole lives. The book brought oftentimes by ſome one man, as ſome meſſenger, if it be an Epiſtle, or otherwiſe ſent from ſome other place, or from ſome one perſon, as from *Titus* or *Timothem*, to whom it was firſt written, and upon whoſe authority only the whole verity muſt originally rely. But to return to our caſe. Do you not ſee that the whole Church truſteth ſome one particular man at the firſt, upon whom ſhe buildeth her belief that this is ſuch an Apoſtles work, that is, *Scripture?* But for any material point of Doctrine, ſhe relieth upon the univerſal knowledg of them, who heard it preached in divers parts of the world. So that, as I do not intend to ſay, the one is certain, the other not, (for a particular Churches authority may be certain in ſome circumſtances)

yet I must needs say, that betwixt these two certainties there is such a difference, that if the one were to bring in verdict upon the other, it would be much more forcible and evident to conclude, that this Book is Scripture, because it is according and conformable to the Doctrine taught and preached, than that this Doctrine is the Apostles, because it is conformable to this Book. For if it be true, that the whole Church once relied upon some one particular Church for this verity, it can never come to pass that the certainty of this Book prove greater than was the authority of that particular Church at that time. And consequently, the same comparison, which is to be made betwixt the authority of this particular Church and of the universal Church, the same (I say) is to be made betwixt the certainty of this Book being Scripture, and of this Point of Doctrines being Catholick and Apostolick. And for the inconvenience you were jealous of, it falleth out quite contrary. For whether we consider the inspiration & assistance of the Holy Ghost, or the industry or carefulness of man, you shall ever finde that the end is more principally aimed at, than the means to compass the end, and likewise amongst divers means the most immediate to the end is still most aimed at, wherefore in our case the end both of writing and speaking being the delivery of this Doctrine for the good of the People, no doubt (I say) but that both the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and the care of man tendeth more principally to the delivery of this Doctrine than to other things that came in by chance, in which onely there might be a slip, as you imagine. Wherefore sithence Tradition containeth not all the words the Apostles spoke, but meerly what belongs to Christian Doctrine, (which was principally delivered, and the chief Errand of the Apostles) and that in the Scripture many things are written upon occasion, and as it were by the by, no doubt but in both these respects, to wit, of the assistance of the Holy Ghost, and of the care of man, the certainty will be greater

greater of the Doctrine delivered by word of mouth, than of the holy Writ. Besides the slips you speak of, are when things are onely once delivered, or spoken without great premeditation, whereas this Doctrine was a thing perpetually beaten on, so as there can be no fear of such slipping. For the *old Testament* as I confess, 'tis possible that the Apostles might have delivered it in all Countries where they preached; so likewise I think 'tis evident that they never did it, being that the Church hath no such memory. And that the Canon hath been doubted of by some, and the *Jewish* Canon alleadged, whereof there had been no use nor need, if the Apostles had left to all Churches the Book it self. It is likely therefore that the *old Testament* was brought in by the first Christians of the Circumcision, who accepted of those Books, which they saw the Apostles honour and make use of, and from them it came to the Gentil Christians, and so by little and little was accepted of by all the Christian Church with the same veneration that the Apostles and *Jewish* Christians gave unto it. But howsoever shall we not think at last,

How the old Testament came to Christians hands.

§. 3. *That Tradition for Scripture is more universal than Tradition for Doctrine?*

Nephew. SUrely, Uncle, for my part I cannot think but that the Scripture hath a more universal Tradition than any Point of Christian Doctrine, or at least than any of those which are disputed betwixt us and the Protestants, seeing that all Christians do agree in the acceptation of the Scripture, and far fewer in divers points of Doctrine. For such Churches, as are in communion with the Church of *Rome*, are no such extraordinary part of Christendom, if they were compared to all the rest.

Uncle. For the extent of the Churches I cannot certainly tell you the truth, because I fear many are called Christians who have little either in their belief or lives to verifie that name. But you know in witnesses the quality is to be respected as well, and more than the quantity. So that such Countries, in which Christianity is vigorous, is to be preferred before a greater extent of such as are where little remains more than the name: But to come nearer to your difficulty, suppose that in a suit in law, one side had seven lawfull witnesses, the other had as many, and twenty Knights of the Post, known perjured Knaves, or unlawfull witnesses more, Would you cast the other side for this wicked Rabble?

Nephew. No truly, for seeing the Law doth invalidate their testimony, I should wrong the party to make any account of them, and therefore I should judg the Parties equal.

Uncle. Why then you see that who will challenge a more universal *Tradition* for Scripture than for Doctrine, must first be certain that there is no lawfull exception against those *Christians* whom he calleth to witness, to wit, against the *Arrians Nestorians, Eutychians*, and the like. Now the Catholick Church accounteth these men wicked in the highest degree, that is, guilty of Heresie and Schisme: and therefore the party which esteemeth of their witness, must, by taking of them for honest men, bear himself for their fellow, and account the *Roman* Church wicked, and not fit for testimony, from whom nevertheless he hath received whatsoever he hath of *Christ*. Besides the witness and testimony which these men give, is onely that they received Scripture from that Church which excluded them from communion at their beginnings, and ever continued in opposition against them, to wit, the Catholick. Wherefore it is evident that their testimony addeth nothing to the testimony of the Catholick Church, but onely declareth what she testifieth, nor consequently maketh any Tradition more universal. Let us therefore now see whether

§. 4. *The Text of Scripture can have remained incorrupted or no?*

FOr hitherto, we have onely compared the authority of Scripture in it ſelf to Tradition, now we will come a little cloſer, and compare it as we have it, to the ſame Doctrine delivered unto us by Tradition. I mean that hitherto we have ſpoken, as if we had thoſe very Books which the canonical Writers made with their own hands, and of what authority they would be. But now we will conſider that ſince we have but Copies of them, of what authority theſe Copies ought to be. Can you reſolve this queſtion?

Nephew. I doubt not, Sir, but for that end which we ſeek, that is, to make a Judg of Controverſies, every word, every letter, and every tittle muſt be admitted of abſolute and uncontrolable certainty. And ſo, I hear, the vulgar Edition in *Latine* is commanded to be held amongſt us. For I eaſily ſee, that if any one ſentence may be quarrelled, every one will incur the ſame hazard, all being equally delivered and equally warranted with reaſon and authority.

Uncle. You ſay very well, for where there is no leſs than the ſouls of the whole world at the ſtake, I ſee not what advantage can give ſufficient ſecurity, if there remain any notable uncertainty. Our Saviour ſaith, *What can all the world avail any man if he loſe his ſoul?* So that where the queſtion is ſoul or no ſoul, ſalvation or damnation, nothing leſs than certainty can ſerve to proceed upon. And therefore no doubt but if the Apoſtles had intended to leave the holy Writ for the decider of Controverſies in Religion, they would alſo have provided that infallible Copies ſhould have been kept and come down to the Church to the end of the world. For ſuch care we ſee that private men have of conſerving their bargains and covenants by making their Indentures uncounterfeitable, and enrolling them in publick offices, where they are to remain uncorrupted: the

like care hath Common-wealths to conserve their Records, specially their Laws, keeping the very Originals and authentical Copies with very great care. But what need we look into the Examples of men, seeing Almighty God in his own person hath given us a patern, commanding the *Deuteronomy* to be kept in the Ark, which he would have to be the authentical Copy to judg betwixt him and his people; and this with the greatest veneration that could be imagined, or that ever was given to any thing. But this was impossible for the Apostles to do (otherwise surely they would have done it, if they had intended that *Christs* written Law should have been our Judg) by reason of the multitude of Nations and Languages which hindered that not any one Book could be conserved with such security and incorruptibility as would be requisite in that case, both because of the Language, and of the mutability of the world, ever subject to a thousand accidents, whereby such Books might fall into the hands of those, who would not onely neglect them, but either wilfully corrupt, or seek uttely to destroy *that* which was to be the Rule and Patern of Christian faith. And for that which you say is commanded us, you conceive amiss. For no wise man thinketh that the Vulgar Edition is so well corrected that much may not be amended, but 'tis that the Church hath secured us that there is nothing against Christian faith or behaviour contained in those Books, which have so long passed for Scripture, and are so indeed for the substance of the Books, and therefore hath commanded us not to refuse this Text in any controversie or disputation. And this we, and we onely, can do, for the Churches security riseth out of this, that she hath another more forcible ground of her faith, to wit, Tradition, by which being assured what the truth is, she can confidently pronounce that in this Book there is nothing contrary or prejudicial thereunto, which no profession that relieth onely upon Scripture can do, because they must

How the Vulgar Edition is to be received.

must first be assured of the Text, before they can judg of the Doctrine; wherefore if the Text it self need a Judg, and that it is questionable whether this be the true Text or no, they must needs be at their wits end, according to the Principles of Reason. Let us therefore see what ambiguity or question falleth upon the Text it self by the succession of so many ages, in which it must needs have been in some sort conserved to come to our hands. There be three ways chiefly whereby the Text may have been corrupted. The first on set purpose, as the Fathers accuse the Hereticks of their times to have done, and the *Jews* also are suspected of the same. And this kinde, though it extendeth it self but to few corruptions, yet they come to be inevitable, when amongst so many Copies none can discern which have been so abused, which not; and as it is but in few points or places, so it is in such as be important and material ones. The second sort of corruptions may have come by the negligence of servants, which copied the Bible, some being mercenary people that made Copies to sell, others witless people, who greedy and desirous to have the Bible out of vanity, hypocrisie, or the like, cared not for more than to say they had it, and a great part of these Copists may have erred in writing the Bible by the very defect of nature, which permitteth not an absolute exactness in any thing, and causeth a man in his weariness, nay, and in his too much wariness also, to make escapes unwittingly, which be the more dangerous by how much the Copies seem more exact, whereby sometimes they bear down true Copies. The third way of corruption may have been by half-witted men, who will now and then undertake to correct Copies by aim and understanding, who for having lighted right in some one place, will venter confidently to spoil ten. And of these men, 'tis like before Printing began, and Copies were not so frequent, and so a corruption went not far, 'tis like, I say, there hath

Three ways have corruptions come in to the Text.

been divers, who when they met with a place they could not make sense of, and saw that a little change would make it sense, such rash men would easily venter to make such a small (as they thought) mutation, not knowing peradventure how to come to a better Copy than their own. The *Hebrew* and *Greek Testament* have been very subject to the first sort of these corruptions, the former being delivered unto us by the professed Enemies of *Christ*, who, as it is reported, in the greatest heat of their hatred to Christianity, sate at *Tiberias* to determine all the vowels of the old Scripture, the which every *Hebrician* knoweth what power it gave them to change the whole Text, and this to men publickly accused of forgery in that kinde. The *Greek*, as long as the condemned Hereticks held so great power in those parts, as is publickly known they did for some ages, was in little less jeopardy, they being also taxed with the like impiety. But the other two ways and means of corruptions are common to all, and indeed unavoidable in so great a multitude of Copies as were in all the three Languages, at least of *Greek* and *Latine*. And now, Colin, can you tell me what hazard this must needs breed in the Text it self? that is,

§. 5. *What uncertainty the Errours of Writers and Copists hath bred in Scripture?*

Nephew. NAy mary, that poseth my understanding, for if I should calculate so many Copies to have been made, and then estimate what Errours may have escaped in every Copy, the number peradventure would exceed the words of the Bible. For let us take a book of two thousand Columes, and let us likewise, (which is very likely) that as many Copies were made in some age of an hundred years, and let us then put fifty six lines to a Colume, and six words to a line, and so there will be in one Colume three hundred thirty six words, and farther may we not well suppose that there was as many faults

faults escaped in every Copy (one with another) as there be words in a Colume; which being supposed, you will finde that the number of all the Errours escaped in all the Copies, which have been made since the Apostles time, will amount to fifteen or sixteen times as many as there be words in the Bible. Wherefore by this account it would be fifteen or sixteen to one of any particular place that it were not the true Text. Which me thinks cannot be true.

Uncle. I do not think that you have taken your proportion too high, for if you look into the most part, even of printed Books of such a great Volume as the Bible is, review them well and you will finde a whole Colume of *Errata* in every one, and you know printing is done with more ease and less toil to the brain, and hath ordinarily two or three corrections before it be drawn, which helps written Copies have not. But yet I must tell you that you missed it in one thing, you marked not that the Errours of so many Copies may have been the same in divers of them, otherwise truly your calculation would prove that we might look for Scripture in Scripture and not finde it, and the like with some proportion in all Books, I say, with some proportion; for to think altogether the like of *Cicero*, *Demosthenes*, and others, is not reasonable, because there were few Copies made of them, as onely for some curious and learned men, whereas the Bible concerned every man so nearly, that few would be without it that could understand *Latine*. And yet I doubt not but you remember well enough since you were a student, what variety of Texts and pretensions of corruptions you found amongst the Criticks and Commentaries even of those profane Authours. And to your calculation I will add another. Suppose there were as many written Copies extant as the number of your Columes, and as much variety in those which have not been examined, as in those which have been looked into. And farther that *Sixtus Quintus* for the setting out of his Bible caused onely an hun-

dred to be examined, and that in his Bible the corrections amount (as it is known they do) to the number of two thousand, do you not see that the computation made of the various Lections of those Copies would make twenty for every Columne? And truly we cannot imagine there hath been so few either *Latine* or *Greek* Copies; and whereas in this computation we onely esteem them to have been but two thousand. Suppose, as it is very like, that there hath been at least an hundred thousand in either Language in so many ages, and in so great an extent of Readers. And those which are not extant (whereof none in particular can be rejected) make the case more ambiguous, because they give men power out of such or such a probability to conjecture a truth, and out of conjectural proof to believe it. For as we all confess that whatsoever is certainly known to be Scripture, is not to be touched, so we know likewise that whatsoever may be doubted of, whether it be Scripture or no, obligeth to no such respect. Wherefore if Reason conclude and tell us, that in all likelihood there hath been *variæ lectiones* in every particular Columne, though perhaps two or three onely are extant, the rest probably known to have been, yet so as that there is no certain sign of which or where they were. And now there cometh one to press a place in this or that Columne, which his opponent thinketh to be contrary to other places, may he not then justly say, Sir, I mistrust this place to be corrupted? Or can his adversary in prudence urge it on as an assured Text? Or can he press and aver for certain that this is none of the seventeen unknown *variæ lectiones*? Certes he cannot, abstracting from all warrant and command of the Church, and standing to pure and precise Reason. So that all Controversies would be ended, where nothing but Scripture is admitted as Judg, with a *Non liquet*.

Nephew. I expected you should have shewed me how hard it is to agree about the true sense of the words of the Scripture, but as I now perceive

ceive there is as much difficulty to know whether we have the true and right Text or no, which if it were well conceived and understood by our devout and pure Citizens Wives of *London*, who turn and view the Text so curiously when the Preacher citeth it, I believe it would much cool the zeal of their spirit, if such a qualm should come over their stomacks as to think, these words peradventure are not the *holy Scripture*. But to this, Uncle, may you not add the variety of Translations? I pray tell me,

§. 6. *What uncertainty the multiplicity of Translations have bred in Scripture?*

Uncle. NO doubt, Cosin, but great uncertainty is sprung from the variety of Translations, whereof we may first suppose, that there is no *constat* of any infallibility in the Translatours, no not of the *Septuaginta* themselves, which the Protestants will easily grant. I know there is a story, how that the *Septuaginta* being separated one from another, their Translation light to be the same word for word. Which if it were certain, I should esteem their Translation of as great authority as the original Text it self. But we see that even in the Apostles time some sought to mend their interpretation, as *Theodotion* and *Aquila*, whose Translations were nevertheless accepted of by the Church, and conserved and esteemed. Wherefore there is no likelihood that the Apostles and the Church of their times held the *Septuaginta* Translation to be specially from the holy Ghost. Nor doth it import that the Apostles sometimes used in their speeches or writings this Translation, for they must needs use it or none when they wrote to those whose Language was *Greek*, and therefore would have thought them to have mistaken the Text, if they had cited the Scriptures words according to the *Hebrew*, when the *Hebrew* was different from the *Greek*.

What of the Septuaginta Translation.

Greek. Nor can we certainly tell that it was always the Apostle that used it, and not the Historian, who writing in *Greek*, and to the *Grecians*, cited the *Greek* words, what words soever the Apostle had used, being both to the same effect. The next point which we may consider in this variety of Translations is, that never any began a new version in the same Language, but for some mislike in the former. For if he thought a new Translation to be necessary, he must needs conceive that the former Translatour had in many and important points missed and altered the minde of the Authour. Whereby every wise man will see that a Book of importance is never left off to be translated, untill there be some inhibition to the contrary. And hence we may conclude that it is impossible for a Translatour to be so exact, as that his words shall be taken for the words of the Authour. Nay contrariwise, it is the law of a good Translatour not to yield word for word with the very Original, but to express the sense thereof in the best manner he can. For since no two Languages jump equally in their expressions, it is impossible that every word of the one should have a full expression of every word of the other, much less that their Phrases should be the same, so that perforce there must needs be a great difference in particulars, although the substance of the sense and meaning be the same. And who should confer any one Chapter of two Translations in the same Language, and see whether any one sentence do so exactly agree, as that scanning rigorously the variety of their words, there may not be some different sense gathered out of them, And he will not deny but 'tis impossible to put fully and beyond all quarrel the same sense in divers words. And truly I think that every one will admit at least as much difference and variety betwixt the Original and the Translation, as betwixt Translation and Translation, these agreeing in the same Tongue, those not, and yet having all the other

Why divers Translations in the same Tongue

Reasons

Reasons of disagreeing. And do you not think Cosin, that if one should take twenty of the best Scholars in a School, and give them an Authour to translate either out of *Latine* into *English*, or out of *English* into *Latine*, that their Translations would so differ in many Sentences, as that divers senses may be easily gathered out of them. And judg thereupon that when wits are set contentiously to discuss every possible variety, what truth can be convinced where any two may disagree, though both acknowledg the Authour? Another considerable circumstance is, that amongst all ancient Translations none can be rejected, because it may ever be supposed, that the reason of this variety may proceed from a various Copy, out of which they were translated, and by reason we cannot disapprove the Copy, as we said before, we cannot therefore likewise neither justly nor certainly refuse the Translation, having nothing to ground such refusall but conjectures and likelihoods, which be very imperfect. And if we come to calculate, we may very well suppose that there are now some twenty Translations made into several Languages. I might put more, for there hath been peradventure two hundred *Latine* Translations, considering the greatness of the *Roman* Empire for so many Ages, and the esteem of the Book, making every man desirous to have an exact Text, none being as yet ever acknowledged for such, nor any prohibition of translating Scripture. Which variety of *Latine* Translations the Protestants themselves acknowledg, and say very well, that they perished after S. *Hierom's* correction and amendment of the *Bible*, whose complaints of the variety of Texts all the world knows, and indeed the inutility and discommodity of such multiplicity caused them all to be neglected, though some think our *vulgata editio* to have ever been conserved. Howsoever we may go on with our supposition, and add, that of those twenty Translations now extant, every one is equal to any other. Let then a sentence be proposed, whose nature and definition is to decide a controversie,

but with this condition, which ordinarily happeneth in such a case, to wit, that it dependeth on the propriety of some word, or on the *emphasis* of some manner of speaking. Is it possible that any reasonable man should think that all these Translations will agree in such a thing? Three or four peradventure may, but for twenty 'tis absolutely impossible; and if any one of these Translations be substantially different, all the rest cannot with certainty or evidence bear it down, sithence this might be out of a different copy, with which perhaps agreed more than we have, so that still we shall return to our former *non liquet*. And hence followeth, that although a Translation in the whole bulk be morally the same Book with the Original, yet metaphysically and rigorously there is great diversity, and at least *such*, as in our case maketh all Translations of the Scripture unfit to decide Controversies by them.

Nephew. Your discourse will not onely make me beleive what I have heard reported S. *Augustine* should say, that *he would not believe Scripture, unless the Churches authority moved him thereunto.* *Epist. Man. fund. cap. 5.* But I fear it tendeth to the too great weakning of the Scripture, which hath been so happily planted in the Church, and got this supereminent authority which it hath, to some good effect, without doubt, though not for the decision of Controversies, and therefore you will prove too much, and in seeking to destroy one Errour, you will be in danger to fall into another. This I am sure of, that if you should preach this Doctrine at S. *Antholins*, the people would stone you with their brasen cornered *Bibles*, though peradventure if they laid all their heads together, they could not give you a sufficient answer. But thus much I learn, now when I reflect upon them, that they have no reason to object against us our trusting of our Church and Pastours for the sense and explication of the Scripture, whereas themselves must needs rely upon a dozen or twenty Parsons or Ministers (if there were so many imployed in their

their Translation) for the very Text it self, whose skils or wills might be defective according to their own maxime, so that we rely upon the whole Church, they, poor people, upon what they neither think certain, nor infallible, nor probable, but as far as they please.

Uncle. I will finde a time to satisfie your fears of my diminishing the Scriptures authority, and will shew you how all I have said doth nothing prejudice the lawfull and intended use of the Scripture, and if I should chance to forget, I pray you put me in minde before we part. For the present I will propose you another difficulty, which is,

§. 7. *Whether the very rehearsing and citing of anothers words do not breed variety and uncertainty?*

And let us suppose the Writer himself play the Translatour, as for Example, that our Saviour himself having spoken in *Hebrew* or *Syriak*, the holy Writer is to express his words in *Greek* or *Latine*. And farther that this which we have said of Translations, be (as truly it is) grounded in the very nature of divers Languages, and therefore unavoidable by any art or industry, will it not clearly follow that even in the Original Copy, written by the Evangelists own hand, there is not in rigour the true and self-significant words of our Saviour, but rather a Comment or Paraphrase explicating and delivering the sense thereof. Nay, let him have written in the same Language, and let him have set down every word and syllable, yet men conversant in noting the changes of meanings in words, will tell you, that divers accents in the pronunciation of them, the turning of the speakers head or body this way or that way, the allusion to some person, or to some precedent discourse, or the like, may so change the sense of the words, that they will seem quite different in writing from what they were in speaking.

ing. So that you see how like negligent men we commonly use to press words, as the proper and identical words of our Saviour, finding them registred in the *holy Writ*, which in rigour and exactly speaking are but in some sort an imperfect and equivocal Paraphrase or Expression of *Christs* own true words, the weakness of mans speech and expression bearing no greater exactness. And surely all experienced men, but especially disputative Scholars (who finde means dayly to explicate the plaineſt words of an Authour to a quite different sense) will tell you, that to seek to convince an exact truth out of bare and dead words, is to put your self into a darksom and wilde labyrinth; and to rely upon them, is to fix the Camelions colours in the current of the winde or water. Wherefore, Cosin, having (I think) sufficiently told you my minde concerning the Text it self, let us go farther and look into

§. 8. *The uncertainty of Equivocation, which of necessity is incident in all Writings.*

ANd to proceed more clearly, we will suppose for the present, that there is but one authentical Copy of the Scripture, written in some one Language, and hereby abstract from all varieties of *Texts* by Translations, or Errours, or any such accident, and meerly consider what of necessity follows out of this, that the Scripture is a Book written in words of men, and whether, this supposed, there can be any decisive and decretory sense evidently and certainly gathered out of it. Tell me then, Cosin, do you think 'tis an easie matter to decide Controversies by words? or why not?

Nephew. I know words are but signs of what is in our mindes, set and ordained to that end by the will of man, and therefore that divers men signifying their mindes by divers signs, come to make divers Languages. And I know likewise that though it be an ordinary thing amongst

What are words.

amongst us to hang up a bush to signifie thereby that in the house there is wine to be sold, yet peradventure in another countrey something else may signifie the selling of wine, and a bush some other thing. So may it happen, that the same word in one Language may signifie one thing, and in another something else. And because I likewise see that it may so fall out that these two Nations joyn in one, or have much commerce together, by use and custome this word may come to have two significations, even in the same Language, and so will breed a difficulty in whether of the two sense it is to be taken, which I conceive is called Equivocation. And sithence there is no other ground for either of these significations but man's will, which cannot be easily demonstrated, I know not well how the truth can certainly be known.

The origine of Equivocation.

Uncle. You say very well, for the signification of words must needs depend of mans will, and of the custome and use of them, two very mutable things. Wherefore separating these two, and taking words in themselves, you shall finde that man's will doth put divers significations upon the same word, either by chance, or on set purpose; by chance, as you declared but now, which indeed doth not reach to many words, but is casual as the cause of it is; on set purpose, and that either for want of words, or by desire of elegance and variety in our delivery, and this belongeth to almost all the words we have, for there is scarcely any word (if you note it) but may be so used, and if it be so taken, it is so one time or other. This multiplicity of variously taking words in Logick is said, by who maketh the least, to be eight fold, for some make no end of multiplying the sorts of it. And under the name of Equivocation or Analogy it much confoundeth all scholastical learning. Now for the custome and use of words there be many things to be respected, as the variety of times, and qualities of persons, for in one time a word may signifie one thing, and in another a

quite different thing. So we see that those who write of Eloquence give words their births and old ages. And likewise who knows not how great difference there is betwixt the use of words in the Court or University, or great Cities, and the use of the same words in remoter parts and villages. Nay, if you mark it, you shall finde that as Languages in general are the institution of a multitude of men, so also every particular man is Master, and as it were to be founder of some particular Expressions or Phrases not common to others, whereby some declare themselves more exactly and plainly, others more confusedly and ambiguously, in so much that Criticks, curious in ancient Writings, will attribute or derogate certain Works from Authours upon this onely ground. And now I pray, Cosin, in such an ancient Writing as the Scripture is, how many ambiguities may grow from all these Principles? Or rather what certainty can be had out of such multiplicity of uncertainties? But let me particularly urge one thing, that is, whether 'tis possible that a Language should be entirely conserved in written Books, which still remain the same?

Nephew. Why not? if there be Books enough, for then all the words of that Language may be found in them in all their senses, and then I think the Language cannot perish.

How a Language is conserved.

Uncle. Your answer is partly true, but not sufficient, for you were to consider whether so many Books of one Language may have been conserved? for if the Countrey be little, few Books will be written in the Language, but if the Language be dispersed through many Countreys, it will have its proper words and significations for every Countrey. So that Books being written for the subjects, and not for the Language, (as *Dictionaries* and Phrase-books are) it must needs follow, that onely so much of the Languague will be conserved as is necessary for the understanding of those Books, which of themselves are so good, as

that

that the People still desire to have them, and continue them. Wherefore neither all Books that are written, nor, (if we judg by these of our time) any notable part will be conserved, nor yet the whole Language contained in all the Books that are written. And if part of the Language be lost, part conserved, of necessity the conserved part must be imperfect by the mistake of such words as be rarely found, and where they are found, onely, ghest at by the rest which are to make sense with them. And all this equivocal ambiguity is purely in the bare words, not yet placed in construction.

Nephew. I think so, Uncle, for although I see there be Cases, Numbers, Moods, Tenses, and Persons in every Language, yet I hope they do rather take away Equivocation than make it.

Uncle. It is true, those things are made to take away Equivocation, but if you reflect, you shall finde that the want of them, and the confused or unexact use of them doth likewise cause it, and where they are more abundant (as in some Languages) there the abuse of them is more frequent, People being in nothing more unwary than in their words; and where they are but rare and few, that likewise causeth ambiguity. And if you will look into those particular Languages wherein the Scripture was primitively written, you shall finde that the *Hebrew* hath eight Moods wholly different from any of either the *Greek* or *Latine* Moods, and ever varying the sense, as much as the *Active* and *Passive* do in *Latine* and *Greek*. The *Greeks* have seven *Tenses*, all of different significations, and of *Numbers*, *Genders*, *Persons*, three a piece. The *Latine* six *Cases*. So that you see new occasions of Equivocation almost in every word, and consequently what obscurity and doubtfulness must of necessity follow any Language or sense relying upon words; and yet for brevity sake, I have not told you the half of what the matter giveth me scope to say; for the Scripture dependeth and hath been originally written in more Languages than I have spoken of, whereof some have much

more variety than any of those that I have expressed. For construction, you may first conceive that the very pointing and accenting of words doth beget a number of doubts and Equivocations, a divers *comma* or *virgula* making sometimes the sense quite different. Secondly, that word which is construed with another to clear the signification of it, is sometimes it self of no less ambiguity than the other. Thirdly, in the same construction it may happen that the same two words will have divers senses. And of all these your *Grammar* and Oratory Masters, do enlarge their Precepts. And above all, there is an Equivocation in the most common words we use, rising out of a kinde of custome depending of particular times and places, which the Compilers of the Civil Law thought to be of so great importance as that they judged it necessary to make a special Book *de usu & interpretatione verborum*, and that for the commoneſt words that were in use. These Reasons being unavoidable in any Language by humane industry, are more than sufficient to let you see that 'tis impossible to convince and demonstrate any thing out of bare and dead words, and that who undertakes such a task, doth not see what he attempteth.

Nephew. If all these things be true which you tell me, I wonder with what face any man can pretend to convince points of Controversies so clearly out of the Scripture, which some do with much confidence; for surely, they must either be proud Dunces, and ignorant Dolts, not understanding what is proof, and what is not, or else prevaricating miscreants, counterfeiting what they do not believe, and think our learned men unable or unwilling to discover the folly of their Enterprise.

Uncle. Your bloud is too hot, Nephew, but if you said onely, that such men as promise themselves victory with so much confidence in this case, are rash and unadvised, I should think you wronged them not. For the truth is, there's none but is so in his measure. And where interest or affection

affection is joyned to some little apparence, which the first sight of the Text affordeth, there's presently a great impression made. It is true, in so grave and important a case they ought to be more staid, but he, whose conscience quitteth him from all too forward judging of his neighbours, even in matters of consequence, let him cast the first stone for me. I will leave them to themselves, and let you see that we are not yet at an end, but farther,

§. 9. *That there riseth an uncertainty out of this, that the Scripture was written in Languages now ceased.*

FOr not onely the Languages in which the holy Scripture was written, do of their own nature (as I told you) breed great ambiguity in the Text, but also in this, that those Languages are now extinct. And therefore we see that the knowledg of them is not common and universal, but onely of some particular men, and amongst them in most things mainly controverted. And of this disputable uncertainty amongst our famous Linguists none can be ignorant, the number of Criticks in this age, and the multitude of their Volumes give sufficient testimony of it. Nay, they will tell you that an exact and skilfull knowledg in this Criticisme is a necessary part and quality for all those who will profess the study or interpretation of Scripture. And yet God knows upon what slight ground they proceed, what weak ghesses are their judgments, how full of quarrels and mistakes, so that a wiseman no sooner seeth them, but seeth likewise that there is nothing but varieties of disputes upon conjectural probabilities, and nevertheless you shall have them cry out, Run to the Fountain, Go to the Spring, See the Original Texts, not considering that there is nothing there but troubled waters, that is, obscure conjectures. I could tell you

The uncertainty of Criticisme.

you alſo, that oftentimes it happeneth that ſuch as are imployed in the Tranſlation of theſe ambiguous Originals, have got by friends and favour that preferment, and ſo have let paſs ſome places in their Tranſlations (which I could cite) againſt their own judgment, to comply with the will of their Patrons, and higher Powers, whom they durſt not reſiſt. And indeed their Principles in themſelves are ſo uncertain, as that the beſt and wiſeſt of them will confeſs, they have been often miſtaken, and will not ſtick to change their mindes now and then, even in ſuch points as they thought they had the greateſt evidence their art could afford them. What think you then (dear Coſin) would become of Chriſtian faith, if it were onely to rely upon a weak foundation? which muſt needs follow, if the moſt ſubſtantial Points of Chriſtian Religion muſt have their onely warrant and deciſion from the bare written Word, and be ever agitated by places of Scripture, and never concluded by a definitive ſentence. Were it not too tedious, I would let you ſee the uncertainty of divers particular Languages, wherein ſeveral parts of the Scripture are ſaid to have been originally written; but I will onely tell you in a word,

§. 10. *What uncertainty followeth the two particular Languages of* Hebrew *and* Greek, *wherein the Scripture was written.*

FIrſt therefore, the *Hebrew* hath two proprieties very conſiderable, the one, that it is thought to be the ſhorteſt Language in the world; the other, that it is the moſt eloquent. For the firſt, it conſiſteth chiefly in the writing of the words, and in the ſcarcity of Books. For the writing, all the vowels are ſuppoſed, not expreſſed in the original Copies, and therefore onely conſerved by memory, and to memory we muſt truſt for them. I confeſs they are now expreſſed by

by Points, wherein there is great mistaking, the Rules thereof being very uncertain, and the more, in that these Rules and the practice of them were varied according to the diversity of the Countreys wherein the *Jews* have been dispersed. The reason of their writing without Points I conceive was, because their vowels being at the first but five, by making long and short grew to be more: and so the first figures of them to stand onely for the consonant use of some vowels, or else to have no sound. But whatsoever the Origine was, the effect must of necessity breed a great obscurity and doubtfulness in the Language, the vowels, though fewer, yet in use being very near as much as the consonants. The words are all of one or two syllables, if any be of more, they are accounted exotick, and therefore very like one another, which is also increased by the nearness of divers of their letters. So that both their pronunciation and writing, being easily mistaken and confounded, brings a great disorder in the Language. This is likewise augmented by the want they have of Conjunctions and Prepositions, which not being of a sufficient number make the construction very equivocal many times. For the scarcity of Books, you may well conceive it, if you do but know that the legitimate *Hebrew* is wholly contained in the old Scripture, whereof some parts were not written in *Hebrew*, and if you saw the Book in a small print, and yet the Letter bigger than our little *Latine* character, you would see it is but a very little Book. And whatsoever beside is written in *Hebrew* is not warrantable to explicate the Text, Rabbins affecting many diversities as well in words and stile, as in writing. Nay, perhaps I might add to this, that the characters themselves have been wholly changed since the beginning, and that it is credibly reported to have been once lost, and restored onely by the memory of *Esdras*. So that we have the least assurance of this Language that almost can be of any not entirely extinguished. For the propriety of the *Hebrews* eloquence it consisteth chiefly in figures, translations, and number.

Figures

Figures or Schemes are the highest part of proper Rhetorick, because they contain the greatest force and sway that words can give to our appetite, and if they be rightly applied carry away the Auditour even against his will unto a strong and suddain action. These, although the Prophets use them more perfectly than ever any Poet or Oratour did, yet do they not cause much obscurity, unless it be when they are used in Dialogue form, which where it is used in Scripture, 'tis hard to discern. Howsoever they are a convincing proof, that who useth them much intends not his writings should be dogmatical and decisive. Translations or Metaphors are the cause of great obscurity, and therefore we see the Poets, who chiefly use them, are not to be read (untill a man be exercised in them) without study and pains. Nor do any *Greek* or *Latine* Examples shew that strength which the Scripture hath in this kinde. The number or Cadence, which one would think could not be suspected of any such matter, is a cause of great ambiguity, for the *Hebrew* being wholly given thereunto in their Scripture, have so many accents of divers effects, whereof many times one standeth for another, or is like another in figure, that you had need of an *Ariadne* to lead you through. Some of their accents are Grammatical, some Rhetorical, some Musical, and as much ado with them as with the rest of the words, and very hard it is to know when it is one accent, when it is another, and when it hath this effect, when that. Who therefore would have recourse to the *Hebrew* Text for precise and convincing decisions, doth like him, that being not skilfull at his weapon, would chuse, upon a challenge, for the hour of his combat, a Moonless midnight, when the skill of this Enemy could not prejudice him.

Nephew. Mary Sir, I think such a man should do wisely, for the question being not of fencing, but of valour, his Enemies skill would be no disadvantage to him. But yet I cannot commend him that chuseth obscurity for the decision of a doubt, unless he fear his cause, and think himself in the

wrong,

wrong, and then peradventure his wit may be commended.

Uncle. It is sufficient for me, that you conceive that this is not the way to clear the truth. To the *Greek* Text therefore, which I will tell you, that the ambiguity of it is nothing so great as of the *Hebrew*, yet hath it two defects. The one, that it wanteth those sense-varying Conjugations whereby the Oriental Languages express themselves, the other, that by abundance, or rather redundance of unprofitable varieties, it is both hard to learn, and uncertain in sense, the same word signifying diversly, either because of divers dialects, or of divers applications of Authours, so many having written in several Countreys not depending one of another, and having great diversity of fancies. Their Prepositions both in construction and composition are irregular, changing sometimes the sense of the Primitive very extravagantly, in so much that meer ghess and conjecture must prevail, the word, if it be common, being used in sundry senses, if it be rare, the meaning of it must be gathered out of something adjacent.

Nephew. Here is enough, Uncle, of this verbal and Grammatical stuff. Wherefore I will now put you in minde of your promise, to wit, that you will tell me to what end the Scripture was left to the Church, since by reason of its ambiguity it is not fit to be a Judg of Controversies?

Uncle. I will tell you presently, but first I have a word more to say unto you, wherein, because I see you are half weary, I will be short, and it shall be to shew you,

§. 11. *That the very nature of the Books of Scripture is not fitting to deciding of Controversies.*

TEll me then, Cosin, suppose you were to give a Law in writing, which should last for many ages, and be observed in many countreys, how

would you cauſe it to be written? I mean not for the Language, but for the frame of the work, and for the manner or methode of the delivery of it.

Nephew. I do not profeſs my ſelf able to be a Law-maker, yet according to the example of our Laws, and of the Civil Law, (and I imagine the like of the Laws of other Countreys) it were me thinks to be done thus. I would first cauſe the moſt common things to be commanded, then by degrees I would deſcend to particulars, ſtill obſerving that ſeveral matters ſhould be under ſeveral Chapters or diviſions, and not one piece here, another there, every Chapter containing all things neceſſarily belonging to that matter. Farther I would diſtinguiſh the degrees of commands by the degrees of Penalties and Rewards. And if any thing were fit, partly to be declared, partly to be left to diſcretion, I would expreſs ſo much, that there might be no miſtake. As for the ſtile, I would endeavour to make it the moſt proper and exact that poſſibly I could, explicating ambiguous words to my power, and declaring in what ſenſe they were to be taken, cutting off all ſuperfluous words, which might any way confound or prolong the ſentences without neceſſity. In fine, I would labour to make it the moſt ordinary, the moſt plain, and the moſt ſhort that my wits could reach unto, and then according as I ſhould have followed theſe Rules, I ſhould think to have performed my task. *In what form Laws ought to be made.*

Uncle. I ſee you would make a good Stateſman, and if Reaſon teach you this, will not the ſame Reaſon tell you likewiſe, that if the Authour of Reaſon himſelf were to give a Law, would he not do the ſame in a more perfect degree? And if in any Book he hath not done it, doth not the ſame Reaſon tell you, that his intention was not, that *that Book* ſhould be a judging Law? Let us therefore ſee whether theſe conditions be obſerved in the Scripture or no? and if it be

be manifeſt that the Scripture hath them not, this controverſie muſt needs be at an end, ſithence it will evidently follow, that God never ordained the Scripture for any ſuch purpoſe, but for ſomething elſe, and conſequently it were as ridiculous to ſeek the deciſion of controverſies out of Scripture, as to cut with a beetle, or knock with a ſtraw. Dividing therefore the holy Scripture, you ſhall finde, that the Books of the *old Teſtament* (ſaving *Deuteronomy*, which is, or containeth the old Law, with much admixtion of Hiſtory) are either hiſtorical, oratorical, poetical, or philoſophical; whereof the three firſt are excluded by their very names from the qualities and conditions of a Law inſtituted for the deciding of quarrels, though ſome commands may be therein contained upon occaſion. The philoſophical books are ſuch as touch little upon our controverſies, becauſe they are but either moral inſtructions for the life and converſation of men amongſt their neighbours, or elſe they treat and ſpeak onely of ſuch Points as we and all our Adverſaries agree in. But indeed there is a main Reaſon againſt the whole Text of the old Law, which is, that the commands were given, as we ſay, perſonally to one People, and did no farther belong to the reſt of the world than in that they were natural commands, that is, in the virtue of nature obliging to obedience. So that whoſoever will argue out of the *old Teſtament*, muſt firſt prove the command to be natural, which if he do, he needeth not produce the Text for it. The *new Teſtament* is hiſtorical, epiſtolar, or myſtical, which by their very names and natures exclude all ſuch exactneſs as of neceſſity is required to a judging Law, they being all written upon ſpecial occaſions, and for particular ends, many things repeated, many things left out in one, which are found in another, ſcarcely any one knowing of anothers writings. Thoſe things which are in the Hiſtory and in the Epiſtles,

The diviſion of the books of the old Teſtament.

The diviſion of the books of the new Teſtament.

ſtles, are expreſſed as was fitting for the underderſtaning of them to whom they were written, or to whom the recited ſpeech was made, circumſtances far different to what is convenient and accommodated to our underſtandings now. And as an able man ſaith of Hiſtory, that becauſe it muſt needs lean and rely upon all circumſtances, even of ſmall moment, he that ſhould govern himſelf by it, muſt of neceſſity be miſſlead: ſo in our caſe the want of knowing circumſtances, and not comprehending the true meaning of what was written in a particular occaſion, muſt of neceſſity make us apt and ſubject to take our aim and rule amiſs. The myſtical book, which we call the *Apocalyps*, being a pure Allegory, is the moſt unfitting of all. This in my judgment is ſo evident, that if any man of common ſenſe would but reflect and really conſider what is requiſite to determine a litigious controverſie betwixt two men, paſſionate of their own opinions, he would never ſay the Scripture is a Book either intended by Almighty God, or any way fit for ſuch a purpoſe. Beſides a prudent and experienced man will tell you, that who looketh into the various diſpoſitions of mens underſtandings, but eſpecially of mens wills, and ſeeth the variety and multiplicity of mens intereſts and paſſions, (which for the moſt part are publickly noted in every man, or at leaſt ſo inwardly hidden, and ſecretly covered, that ſometimes, even he who would and doth ſwear and proteſt himſelf free from all ſuch preoccupations, is nevertheleſs the moſt dangerouſly intangled) that ſuch an one, I ſay, will never think to finde two in two thouſand who, left to their own liberty, will agree in the interpretation of any Law, how plain ſoever, where both are oppoſitly intereſſed. But if we put this Law to be ſupernatural and divine, full of myſtical and ſublime commands, whereunto nature hath not the leaſt inkling whereby to raiſe herſelf to the knowledg thereof, but muſt of neceſſity wholly and preciſely rely upon authority, and captivate her underſtanding *in obſequium fidei*, and this to the moſt obſcure and dark Points and

Articles

Articles that can be imagined, Shall we say, that in this case, every one is to gather his Law, and come to the knowledg of it, as well as he can out of the Scripture alone, so full of infinite ambiguity as you have seen? Were it not first to be proved that Scripture was made and intended for this end? which how possible it is to perform, let any indifferent man judg. Whereas to remit the judgment of all quarrels, disputes and controverlies of Religion unto living men, is more efficacious, more sutable to nature and discretion, and in a word conformable to the practice of our forefathers, and to the principles of common sense and reason.

Nephew. I must confess, I shall never think Scripture was given for a Judg of Controversies. For to make so large a Book, & to mingle in it so many things, which either appertain not at all to the substance of our belief, or be very remotely connexed unto it, and then to leave it to our ghessing what may be the meaning of the words, doth plainly argue some other intention in the writer, than to set down a standing and authentical Text to decide quarrels. And although, I hear the Protestants say, that a plain passage cleareth an obscure, so may it be alike said, that an obscure passage darkens a clear. Wherefore I long to know for what use the Scripture was made.

Uncle. Have yet a little patience, Cosin, and make a reflexion upon some chief Points which have been controverted in the Church of God; as by the *Arrians*, how a spiritual and indivisible Essence, such as Gods is, could have a natural Son. By the *Trinitarians* and *Sabellians*, how the same indivisible thing could be three Persons. By the *Nestorians* and *Eutychians*, how one Person could subsist in two Natures. By the *Pelagians*, how Gods foreknowledg and predestination could stand with merits and free-will. By the *Iconoclists*, how the adoration of Images tended and ended in the Archetype. By the *Berangarians*,

Divers Substantial Points have been opposed by ancient Heretick.

garians, how a natural body can have corporal presence otherwise than by its quantity. By our *Wickleſiſts*, how all things be not governed by a fatal neceſſity; and all theſe renewed by the liberty and confuſion of our laſt ages. Conſider the ſubtilty of theſe queſtions, how they are above nature, and above our comprehenſion, how the truths of theſe diſputes are like the paſſage betwixt *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, limited betwixt two Errours ſo narrowly, as that when they are ſpoken of at large and not dogmatically, (ſpecially before they be examined, and before the ſpeaker by miſtruſt of oppoſition is made wary) it is almoſt impoſſible the ſpeaker ſhould be ſo juſt and ſtraight in his Language, as not to give occaſion to one who comes after him, to pretend his favour for the one or the other Errour. Conſider farther, that wrangling wits (ſuch as for the moſt part they are, who firſt begin a new Faction in the Church) have this property, that they reduce their queſtions by little and little to logical and abſtracted notions, and force the Catholicks to follow them, if they will not deſert their ancient truths; ſo that after awhile one knoweth not where the controverſie lies. For Example, *Simon Magus*, and the firſt Authours of our laſt breaches, preached *that faith did ſo juſtifie, as that good works were not neceſſary*, now their followers draw the queſtion to this, *whether faith or charity be the form of juſtification*, which is almoſt pure Logick. Now if an *Arrian* come and tell you, that the Scripture ſaith, *Pater major me eſt*, and therefore that *Chriſt Jeſus* was not truly God, nor conſubſtantial to his Father, (and the like may be ſaid of the reſt of theſe Hereſies, and even of all the moſt ſubſtantial and fundamental Points of Chriſtian faith) The Catholick maintains the contrary. Now, I ſay, is it poſſible, that any rational man ſhould think, that theſe and the like queſtions can be definitively reſolved by a critical libration of dead and uncertain words, full of equivocal ambiguity, their ſenſe and meaning lying in the breaſt and minde of him who is not to be found, but deceaſed many ages ſince?

since? And if they can not (as it is more than evident they cannot) shall we think, that *Christ Jesus* hath left and established no means or authority upon earth to take up these quarrels, and decide these controversies? Shall matters of such main importance and great consequence ever remain a perpetual subject of endless dissention and division? Shall the Catholick Church and Christian Religion be torn and rent in pieces, even in what is most substantial and essential in her (for still, I say, the like may be said of what Point soever) at the will & pleasure of some private mens fancies, and no power ordained to prevent such essential and eternal disorders? If this be not to ruine & overthrow all Government and Religion, and to introduce confusion both common sense and reason faileth. Put this liberty, (of believing onely what he thinks he findes in the Scripture) but into one mans hands, to wit, the first beginner and broacher of a new dogme, and let him be a man, to whom the sharpness of wit, and sometimes a seeming good life hath given authority (though truly his spirit is governed either by a secret pride, or by some other interest or indignation) and see if such an one be not able to draw a great multitude, even *the third part of the stars* after him, especially if he preach liberty either of minde or body, and have withall the hand of some Prince full of Rewards and Punishments to second his intentions; Calculate what the industry of such a formed party, heartily adhearing together is not able to invent. Some have been able to cast mists even upon Mathematicks, and upon the most certain Principles of Nature, and laying then those qualities of Scripture, which I have told you of, to the disposition of those factious persons, what evidence think you can be expected from the conflicts of such mens disputing upon such grounds?

Nephew. Trouble your self no farther in this Point, for I cannot but confess, that the evidence you have brought is greater than I could expect or desire. Wherefore I pray hold me no longer in suspence, but tell me,

§. 12. *Which be the ways and manners of judging Points of* Religion *out of Scripture.*

Uncle. WHy, Cosin, tell me first, do you see the wall before you, some four or five yeards from you? and how much of it do you see?

Nephew. I see it perfectly well, God be thanked, and it is white, there are four Pictures hang on it, and half a dozen Chairs stand against it. To tell you precisely how much of it I see together, that I perhaps cannot, but in a short turning of mine eye, I can see it all, or very near, if I will.

Uncle. I pray go within a span of it, and then tell me what difference you finde in the sight of the wall.

Nephew. Mary, I finde now that I see much less of it, but that which I do see, & which lies directly before me, I see far better, and can distinguish every little part in it, and of what colour it is.

Uncle. Did you not tell me, Cosin, the wall was white? How comes it to pass, that you tell me now you see what colour every part of it is?

Nephew. It seemed all white before, whilest I was a good way from it, but when I came near it, I could perceive some parts of it dun, others brown, and the like, but sure the white parts were much more.

Uncle. Then, Cosin, you may think that you did not perfectly see the colour of the wall before, for the colour of the wall must needs be the colour of the parts, and you say the colour of the parts is not one but many, and therefore you onely saw the colour of those parts, which did exceed the rest. And if you took any of those little parts and put it in a multiplying Glass, you would see as great difference of parts, and peradventure of colours too, in it, as you saw in the wall when you were within a span of it. So that if one should ask you, what have you seen? you would hardly

hardly quit your self handsomly of the question. Notwithstanding you perceive well enough, that the first sight of the wall serves you for all the uses of your life, as not to run against it, and generally to know how to comport your self, or use any thing else, which were requisite to be set towards the wall, or in any manner to be done about it. The second sight serves you onely to know the nature of the wall, and to distinguish what is mixed in it, or of what ingredients it is composed, or the like. So that you see the easier and more common knowledg of any thing serves for the direction of our lives; the more particular and exact knowledg is onely required, either for the content of the knower, or for some special practice upon the thing known.

Nephew. I believe I understand already which way you intend to carry me, for you will tell me, that there are two manners of understanding Scripture, the one a kinde of large manner, taking it in gross, and a great deal together, as we take a Discourse or Play, which pleasingly passeth away without any great demur, or particular weighing of every word. The other more curious and exact, looking into every little propriety, which may breed any diversity. And I suppose you would tell me, that this second belongs onely to Scholars, but that the former guides our life, and governs our actions. And 'tis true, I see the People are ordinarily carried away by their Preachers, ancient Common-wealths by their Oratours, and in what matter soever an eloquent and elaborate discourse, which passeth sweetly in this sort, gains presently the suffrages of the Auditory. Wherefore I must needs confess, that what good effect soever is, the end, for which the Scripture was ordained, if it be any thing belonging to man's life and conversation, must be compassed by this gross, common, and ordinary course of reading and understanding of it. Whereas if a man should over examine every word, he would not finde ground to fix himself with advantage and utility. Is not this your meaning?

Uncle. You are very right. And surely if we look into what is in the Scripture necessary for our good life and virtuous conversation, we shall finde plainly that 'tis to be had this way. As the direction of our lives and actions to God, acknowledging all things from him, comfort in adversity, moderation in prosperity, compassion of the afflicted, helping of the needy, Rewards of virtue, Punishments of vice, Examples of both, and in a word, the motives of the love of God and our neighbour, and of the contempt of the world. Who therefore is so blinde as not to see, that these things are to be found in the Scripture by a sensible, common, and discreet reading of it; though perhaps by a rigorous and exact ballancing of every particular word and syllable, any of these things would vanish away we know not how? But to come yet closer to our purpose, Do you think this manner of reading Scripture would make a man a perfect believer, that is, a Catholick? Which is as much as to ask,

§. 13. *How Scripture doth determine Controversies.*

Nephew. HOw should I know that, unless I were able to prove my Religion out of Scripture, or at least, that I were able to give a judgment of all that is in Scripture? which is beyond my capacity.

Uncle. Then I will tell you, Cosin, there are two means to make one a Catholick, or a true and perfect believer. The one by shewing every Point of our faith in particular. And this I dare not say that our common and ordinary manner of reading and hearing Scripture is able to do, for we see those, who write of Controversies, do alleadg but few places, nor those unavoidable neither, for some Points of Catholick Doctrine. Nor is it to be expected, because mans nature being ever to add to what is already learned. And seeing likewise that long practice makes men perfect in all Arts, there being no prohibition to perfect

perfect in some sort the instruction of the faithfull, the œconomy of the Church, and some such other things, which the oppressed Primitive Church could not bring to perfection; no marvel I say, if these and the like things cannot, in particular be shewed in the Scripture; but shall therefore I know not how, rise up and exclaim these things to be superstitious, hurtfull to the faithfull, and make a Schisme to destroy them? Who doth not see that this were plain Faction and Rebellion? The other means or way to make one a Catholick, is by some common Principle; as if by reading of Scripture we finde nothing contrary to the Catholick tenet or practice, which our Adversaries call in question: or also we finde it commended there in general, or the Authours and Observers of it praised and extolled. And in this way I doubt not but a sensible and discreet reading of Scripture at large, may and will make any true student of it, a perfect believing Catholick, so he proceed with indifferency, and with a minde rather to know Scripture than to look for this or that Point in it. But now can you tell me, Cosin, how it comes to pass, that since by an exact and particular Examination of the words of Scripture, these truths cannot be convinced and beaten out of it, how, I say, is it possible that by a common and ordinary reading of it these truths should appear, for that cannot be in the sum, which is not in the particulars.

Nephew. I can tell you, that there is the same difficulty in the divers sights of the wall, which you made me experience even now, but to yield you a good Reason either of the one or the other, that passeth my understanding.

Uncle. Have you not seen an invention of the Architects, who can so dispose Pillars in a Gallery, that setting your eye in a certain portion you shall see the figure of a man or a beast, and walking along the Gallery to go to it, it vanisheth away, and you shall see nothing but Pillars? Or have you not seen a Cylinder or Pillar of Glass, before which if you lay certain Papers full of scroles

ſcroles and ſcrabbles, and looking into the Pillar, you ſhall ſee the Picture of a man, or the like? As theſe are done, ſo it happens in our caſe, both in the eye and the underſtanding. For the art of theſe things is, that certain Parts may ſo come together to the eye, as that other parts, either by ſituation, or ſome other accident, remain hidden, and that thoſe parts, which appear, being ſeen without others, will make this or that ſhape. In our caſe likewiſe the quantity of the ſeen parts exceeding the unſeen, keeps the whole poſſeſſion of the eye, in the ſight, and of the underſtanding, in reading, not letting the reſt appear. Hence it is alſo, that this common manner of uſing Scripture is more ſecure than the exact ballancing of it. For neither the variety of Tranſlations, nor the Errours of Copies, nor the difficulties of Languages, nor the mutability of words, nor the multiplicity of the occaſions and intentions of the Writers, nor the abundance of the things written, nor the different framings of the Books, which be the cauſes of uncertainty in a rigorous Examination, have any ſuch power as to break the common and ordinary ſenſe or intention of the Writer in general, as all Books teſtifie unto us. And hence it is likewiſe, that the holy Fathers preſſed Scripture againſt the Hereticks of their times, partly forced thereunto, becauſe Hereticks generally will admit of no proof but out of Scripture; but chiefly by reaſon their works are diffuſe and oratorical, befitting People uſed to Orations and Sermons, as the *Greeks* and *Romans* were, divers of the Fathers themſelves bred in that ſort of learning. Wherefore you ſhall have them cite many places, ſome proper, ſome allegorical, ſome common, all, ſometimes avoidable, if they be taken ſeparately, but the whole diſcourſe more or leſs forcible, according to the natural parts or heavenly light more or leſs communicated to one than to another, yet ſtill in the proportion of Oratours who ſpeak to the multitude, and not to *Socrates* or *Cryſippus*. Wherefore the Scripture in this kinde was a fit-

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ting weapon for them, and the Churches continuing and remaining in their Doctrine shews that they used it dexterously, and as it ought to be used with relation and dependence of Tradition.

Nephew. Why then, Sir, must all disputation of Religion out of Scripture be abolished? For if there can be no certainty gathered out of it in a decisive and definitive way, to what purpose should a man either alleadg it, or admit it in disputes of Religion? At least tell me I pray,

§.14. *What Laws are requisite for disputation out of Scripture?*

Uncle. I Am far from disliking disputation out of Scripture, so it be done with those conditions which are fitting, and which may bring the matter to some period. The first Rule I would have a Catholick observe is, not to dispute with a Protestant, unless he promise to prove his Position evidently and manifestly. For since the Catholick knows there may be certain witty probabilities, and hard places of Scripture brought against him, it were madness in him to leave his *Tenet*, custome (*optima Legum interpres*) standing for him, and the practice of the Church being on his side, which is the greatest argument that can be brought, to shew how, and in what sense the Scriptures, which that Church her self delivers, are to be understood, it were, I say, meer folly in a Catholick to leave his *Tenet*, and accept of another, onely for a probable and likely Interpretation, his own being confirmed by that practice, which makes it more than probable. And it is clear, the Protestant must needs plead against Possession, for at the first breaking, when the Protestants pretended to reform the Church, she was surely in Possession of those things which they pretended to take away, and in possession of that sense of the Scripture, which they pretended to be false. And surely no man of common sense, who is in Possession, and hath the Law in his own

hands, will yield it up without evidence on the contrary part. The second Rule I desire a Catholick should observe is, not to think his cause lost, because himself cannot answer the arguments proposed against him, nor to venter his cause and his possession upon his own wit. For the disputation being in a matter wherein, according to the Protestants grounds, there is no certainty, it follows, that who hath the better wit, or is more practiced in this matter, may bring an argument a good Scholar cannot solve at the first sight, though afterwards either he or some other may. And what a folly were it for a man to venter his soul and conscience upon a subtility or present flash of wit, whereof peradventure within an hour he himself will see the falsity, and condemn his own Errour. Wherefore a Catholick is not to venter the cause upon his own head, nor to confess it weak, because he cannot defend it, for he both may improve himself, and some others perhaps may go far beyond him. The third Rule is, that the Catholick should never undertake to convince his Adversary out of Scripture, but content himself, that these words may well bear this sense, which is in favour of the Catholick Church. And this is both more easie to perform, and sufficient for his purpose. For the Catholick hath an assured ground of his faith besides Scripture, and which relies not upon it, nay, he holds, that this Religion cannot be wholly convinced out of Scripture, to what end therefore, (unless he would shew his wit) should he undertake to prove his *Tenents* by Scripture? For this were to strengthen his Opponent in his own Ground and Principle, to wit, that all is to be proved out of Scripture.

Nephew. You would binde Protestants to very unequal conditions, if you will oblige them to convince, and the Catholick not, nay, that it shall be sufficient for the Catholick to shew this may be the meaning of this or that place of Scripture, whereas the Protestant shall be forced to prove clearly and evidently, that this is the very sense of the Text.

Uncle.

Uncle. Not I, Cosin, but the Protestants themselves oblige themselves to this hard measure; for if a man should strongly maintain that a Beetle were the best instrument to cut withall, & you say, no, were not he bound to cut with a Beetle, and it were no sense, to say, that you should be forced to do it, since you maintain it to to be impossible. So they who hold that the Scripture is the true Judg of Controversies, and fit and able to decide all quarrels and dissentions about the Christian faith and Law, binde themselves, by holding this, to convince their Positions by Scripture, which cannot be exacted at his hands, who saith, Scripture was not made for this end, nor is sufficient for it. And look upon *Luther*, and the Hereticks of his time, nay, upon the Puritans of our days, and see if they do not all maintain, that they can convince their *Tenents* by Scripture, and say, that our forefathers were wholly ignorant of Scripture, and that we now living know nothing of it. But to go on with our Rules of disputing out of Scripture, The fourth condition shall be, that the Catholick do not admit any negative Proofs, as to say, this is an Errour because you can shew no Scripture for it. For this is no Proof, unless they will suppose that nothing is true but Scripture, or that there is nothing to be done, but what is ordained by Scripture, which were absurd, for neither *Catholick*, nor, I think, any good *Protestant* will admit of that supposition, since it were not onely to take away the power of the Church, but even nature from nature; for nature teacheth us to help our selves where Scripture doth not contradict: and as a Puritan seeks a Pulpit or high place to preach in, without looking whether he have a warrant for it in the Scripture to command him; so rational and sensible men seek a particular habit for a Preacher or Clergy-man, whereby he may be more decent, and his words and Exhortations received with more respect and authority, and this without any command of the Scripture, which (where it commands) makes the thing commanded, to be necessary; where it is silent, there it makes nothing unlawfull. *Nephew.*

Nephew. If the Protestants were to dispute upon these conditions, they would keep off I warrant you. Yet this I must tell you, that it were a great satisfaction for indifferent men, that have been brought up in this verbal and apparent respect of the Scripture, to see that the Positions you would induce them unto, can be and are maintained by Scripture, and that they are grounded therein. This perhaps you can do by shewing me some other way of dealing with them, and whether there be not

§. 15. *Another manner of disputing out of Scripture.*

Uncle. FOr their sakes, Cosin, I will tell you another sort of disputation, wherein the *Protestant* shall have no other disadvantage but of his cause. For I think the Catholick cause may not onely be maintained by Scripture, but also that it hath the better, standing precisely to Scripture alone. I confess this kinde of disputation is not fit for many Auditours, but onely for moderate and understanding men. And it is to make this the question. *Whether party is more probable, if onely Scripture were to be alleadged?* This question requires divers suppositions whereon both sides are to be agreed, which I fear will be somewhat hard. As what Texts are to prevail, what Commentaries or Explications shall be allowed of, what is a proper and an improper speech; amongst improper speeches which must be preferred, what Copies of every Text shall be held for good, what conjectures shall be accounted null against the natural sense, and many other such Positions, which would not be easily resolved. This done, let both sides bring their places for the Point in question, and so the disputation will onely be of the qualification of the places, that is, to shew whether are more apparent and likely of the two. And for this I see likewise, that so many logical Principles are first to be resolved, which partly are found as yet amongst the Criticks

Criticks disputations, as that all, the Logicks hitherto invented, would not afford sufficient light and instruction, to make an evident conclusion, whether side were more apparent in words and Texts. Therefore you may ghess how far these disputatious out of Scripture are from clearing doubts, what little good comes of them, unless they be well governed, and how for the most part the best credit or the best tongue carries away the day by the Auditours prejudicate opinion or weakness. In a word, the Scripture being not written for this end, to wit, for the decision of Controversies, it is not to be expected that it should be, of it self, without the Churches authority much conducing to that purpose, but to inform our lives by an ordinary reading of it, or by preaching, singing, and such like uses; things recommended in the very letter it self, whereas we are never sent to the word for the deciding of Controversies. And now I hope you are fully satisfied.

Nephew. I am so indeed, and give you many thanks, for I see that how few Points soever the Protestants pretend to be necessary, yet can there not any thing be convinced out of bare words, involving so many uncertainties as you have told me of.

Uncle. It is to little purpose for them to say that some few substantial and necessary Points may be proved out of Scripture, it were fitter they would first prove that the Scripture is an instrument made to determine Controversies, or any other of those Principles, which I shew'd you must of necessity be true, if Scripture be our Rule. But this they can never prove, and therefore they seek first to withdraw us from a secure and natural means of relying upon our forefathers, (which nevertheless in all civil and œconomical conversation they themselves cannot live without) and then to leave us to a labyrinth of voluntary and undecidable disputations. Reflect then I pray, Cosin, upon what we have said, and compare our yesternights and this our mornings discourse together,

conſidering firſt how many things are of neceſſity to be conſerved in the Church for the preſervation of faith & good life in her ſubjects; then ſee how many Points have been and are quarrelled, and if any have eſcaped, how all the reſt may be called in queſtion with as much probability & apparance as theſe are; then look upon the qualities of that *Decider of Controverſies* whereunto all the Adverſaries of the Catholick Church do ſeek to draw us, by which there can be no other end of Controverſies, but to leave every man to his own will. And then conclude, that theſe Poſitions being put, there will neither remain government in the Church, nor certainty or conſtancy in belief, nor any thing to be taught and practiſed worthy God Almighty's ſending of a Law-giver, much leſs of ſending his own Son upon thoſe hard conditions, which we apprehend of *Jeſus Chriſt* and reade in the Goſpel.

Nephew. It is very true, but if you leave me thus, I ſhall be like him who had forgot his *Pater noſter*, but not learned his *Our Father*. For you have taught me, what I cannot rely upon, but not what I ought to rely upon; and there is ſo much ſaid againſt the authority of the Church by all her Adverſaries, that a man, who hath been ever beaten to thoſe Objections, cannot eaſily leave them without ſome ſcruple.

Uncle. You are in the right, the moſt neceſſary part is yet behinde, for a little building is better, than a great deal of pulling down. Therefore when your leiſure ſerves you I will be ready to give you ſatisfaction to the beſt of my power. But now this morning is too far ſpent to begin ſo large a diſcourſe as that queſtion requires, Take another time, and the ſooner the more welcome. But for the preſent, God be with you, I have ſome Prayers to ſay.

DIA-

DIALOGUE III.

By what means Controverſies in Religion may be ended.

This Dialogue containeth fifteen Parts or Paragraphs.

1. THe *Preface or Introduction.*

2. *What force the Arguments of Proteſtants againſt Catholicks ought to have?*

3. *In all likelihood the Catholick party is greater, more learned, and more virtuous.*

4. *Of what efficacy is this Argument?*

5. *That it is no hard matter that* Chriſt's *Law ſhould have deſcended entire unto us.*

6. *That if* Chriſt's *Law could have been conſerved, it hath been conſerved.*

7. *That no great* Errour *could creep into the Church of God.*

8. *That the truth of the Catholick Doctrine hath continued in the Church.*

9. *That the diſſention of the Catholick Doctours concerning the* Rule *of Faith doth not hurt the certainty of* Tradition

10. *That the teaching of Chriſtian Doctrine without determining what of neceſſity is to be believed and what not, hurts not the progreſs of* Tradition.

11. *That*

11. That no Errour can pass universally through the Church of God.

12. That these precedent discourses bear an absolute certainty.

13. Some Objections are solved.

14. The Examples of Traditions which seem to have failed are examined.

15. The conclusion of the whole discourse.

DIA-

DIALOGUE III.

§. 1. *The Introduction.*

Nephew. I Am come, Uncle, to challenge you of your promiſe, for I cannot be quiet untill you have ſettled me in this ſo weighty a matter. If the Points in Controverſie be as you ſay, and as you have clearly ſhewn me, of great conſequence, and that by Scripture we cannot decide them againſt contentious men, I ſee that either we muſt ſeek ſome other means, or elſe all Religion will be confounded, and the truth of *Chriſt's* Law unknown and neglected. Wherefore I pray (if you can) give me a ſtrong Reſolution in this Point.

Uncle. Nephew, if this fervour continue, you will not need be a Scholar, but for a year and a day, I pray you conſider, it is a fair day, and you never want imployment for the afternoons when the weather's fair, if I ſhould ſtay you now, you would perhaps ſo repent it, that I ſhould not, I fear, ſee you again this moneth, be not ſo greedy as to take a Surfeit.

Nephew. I fear mine own inconſtancy, and therefore I pray refuſe me not, diſcontinuance may breed coldneſs, ſpecially if what you have already taught me ſhould be ſullied with worſe thoughts, and then I ſhould not be ſo capable of your inſtructions as, I hope, I am at this preſent, which I have good reaſon to make great eſteem of.

Uncle. Well, if you will have it ſo, you muſt give me leave to trench upon a good part of your Afternoon, for I may be long in this Point, and I would be loath to break off in the middle. Yet I

will be as ſhort as poſſibly I can. Tell me then, Had *Jeſus Chriſt* ever a Church or no? And I would have you anſwer me, what you think a judicious *Proteſtant* would ſay to the ſame demand.

Nephew. I doubt not but any *Proteſtant* of them all would anſwer you, that at leaſt in the Apoſtles time *Chriſt* had a viſible Church, conſiſting of the faithfull which adhered to the Apoſtles and ſuch Biſhops as were made by them; but that ſince that time it is fallen into great Errours, and either mainly apoſtated from the true Doctrine of *Chriſt*, or at leaſt ſo deformed it, that a Reformation was neceſſary even in Points of belief, and this Reform their forefathers undertook.

Uncle. You are likewiſe perſwaded, I ſuppoſe, Coſin, by the ſame evidence, that in the Apoſtles time *this Church* was in communion with the particular Church of *Rome*; and therefore I will go a little farther, and ask you, whether you do not think, that this Church, (whereof the particular Church of *Rome* was a part, and peradventure the principal) was not to be obeyed by every particular man, and every particular Church, ſhe being the whole, they but members or parts? She having received *Chriſt's* Doctrine, and therefore able to teach it, ſhe having received the *Keys of Heaven*, and therefore who *refuſed to hear her ſhould be eſteemed as a Heathen or Publican:* and in a word, ſhe being the *Spouſe* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the mother of his faithfull children.

Nephew. All this is ſo evident that I think neither Proteſtant nor Puritan will deny it. But what do you draw out of this?

Uncle. Nay, ſoftly, Coſin, I muſt ask you one queſtion more before I conclude any thing, and it is, What became of this Church when it fell from *Chriſt?* I mean, Were the men and their Governours ſuddainly extinct, and others raiſed in their places? or did there ſtill continue a publick face and ſucceſſive Government of the ſame Church even in their Errours, and ſo the external Church remained and deſcended to our days, though with corrupt faith and doctrine? *Nephew.*

Nephew. This I doubt not likewise but every one will grant you; for all the *Protestants*, that ever I heard, do acknowledg it, nor do I imagine that any will deny it.

Uncle. Then, Cosin, we will draw this conclusion, that *that Church*, which is now in communion with the particular Church of *Rome*, was once the true Church, or if you please to say, she was but a part of the true Church, so let it be, at least she had the true faith and Doctrine, and every particular man or Church within her own compass was obliged to obey her, as having these worthy Titles which you acknowledg even now to be then due unto her. But now if a Protestant tells you, she hath since fallen, and lost those goodly Titles, How would you convince him? or at least can you tell me,

§. 2. *What force the Arguments of Protestants against Catholicks in this question ought to have?*

Nephew. TO convince a Protestant in this Point I would have recourse to books and learned men, who should maintain and shew that his Position were false, for I am not so well learned as to be able to prove it of my self.

Uncle. I hold you not for a wary Gamester at this Play; for why would you leave your best ward, and put your self upon the disadvantage? I mean, Why will you put your self to prove the Negative, your Adversary being obliged to convince the Positive? for if he confess, as he doth, our Church was once the true Church, we have the Presumption on our side, untill he prove the contrary. Besides, our Church was once the *Spouse* of *Christ*, by their own verdict, though now they stile her the *Whore* of *Babylon*, *erroneous*, and *Adulteress*. And how I pray you, Cosin, would your self take it, if one should lay the like imputation upon your bed-fellow without sufficient

proof

proof to make it good? And imagine *Christ Jesus* will be offended to see his dear Spouse, (whom he bought, and washed with his own hearts bloud) so shamefully traduced without a legitimate cause and just occasion. Do you think he will not brand such accusers for infamous and sacrilegious Calumniatours? Or if such an accuser should fail of his proof, doth he not convict himself of the most heynous crime that can be imagined? And likewise if this same Church was erected and instituted by God himself for our lawfull Lady, and true Governess, can you think that who revolts from the loyalty and obedience due unto her, without evident proof of her Escheat from that Throne and Dignity, doth not declare himself a Traitour and Rebell to God and her? And in a word, if she once were *that Church* to whom *Christ* gave the Rod of Justice, and sent all Professours of his Name to hear her voice and sentence, under Penalty of being reputed Heathens and Publicans, Doth not he incur those Curses, and deserve those ignominious Titles, who leaves her, and divides himself from her, without legal warrant for his separation? Doth not therefore common sense conclude, that whosoever confesseth the *Roman* Catholick Church to have been the true and lawfull Church of *Christ*, is by this very Deed obliged to prove clearly and evidently her fall from that majesty, or else in his own conscience and judgment must needs be liable to those foul and unworthy taints of Treason and Rebellion against God and his Church?

Nephew. I confess, you speak no Parables, nor is there any deep learning required to conceive the evidence of your discourse. Yet this I must tell you, that I fear you might have spared your labour, for there's no Protestant but will easily undertake to prove, that the *Roman* Church is gone astray; for if they cannot do this, they can do nothing, their whole Religion being but (as they themselves confess) a taking away of abuses crept in, and their Divinity no other than to shew this. And if you would shew their Proofs to be insufficient,

cient, I fear you would require a greater Scholar than my self to comprehend your Reasons.

Uncle. Be not discouraged, Nephew, but look into the Case, and tell me what kinde of Proofs you think the Protestants are bound to bring to free themselves from those heavy Censures I told you of? Do you think it were sufficient to bring such Arguments, as some Philosophers brought to prove Snow to be black? or such as by mans wit, and the art of Topicks, a good Logician may frame upon a subject given him? in which kinde some great men have taken pleasure to commend baldness, blindness, and the like imperfections, others to contradict manifest truths, as that there never was any War of *Troy*. Nay, do you think, Cosin, 'tis sufficient, that their Arguments be onely as good as those which the Catholicks bring against them? Or in a word, ought not their Arguments to be *evident* and *unanswerable* in every indifferent and understanding mans judgment? that is, should they not be such, as that a man expert in Controverlies, and of a sound and unpassionate judgment, having seen what the most learned *Catholicks* can say against the *Protestants* Proofs, must nevertheless think in his heart, that they neither have given nor can give any contenting and satisfactory answer thereunto?

Nephew. The plain truth is, if it were my case betwixt my wife and my self, I should not think to have corresponded with my loyalty towards her, nor with that care of her honour which I ought to have, untill I had ventured my life to have his hearts bloud, who should have sought to wrong her Reputation so highly without such proof as you require. Nor do I believe that any Prince or State would think him a loyal subject, who should conceal and foster that man, that should disperse in the hearts of their subjects the like suspitions against their Government. 'Tis true, I should be willing to hear of my wives misdemenours before they come to that height and evidence, for mine own *caveat*, if (which God forbid) she should prove untrue. But there is a great difference be-

betwixt giving warning of likelihoods and appearances of a miſchief, whereby it may be prevented, and blemiſhing or ſtaining my wives and mine own honour with the deepeſt diſgrace that can fall upon ſuch an individual couple. Beſides, I know the bond of love and duty betwixt man and wife to be ſo great, as that ordinary ſuſpitions ought not to perſwade a breach in ſo ſtrong a knot, the greater and harder effect muſt have a more powerfull cauſe, and it were a folly to think all Proofs ſufficient and befitting all caſes. And in my minde the Reaſon is, becauſe no amity nor fidelity can ſubſiſt, if ſuch Principles were ſuffered to be taught and maintained. For how is it poſſible (human accidents of themſelves being intricate and variable, and men now adays ſo witty in doing miſchief) but that every falſe tongue ſhall ſet diſſention betwixt the neareſt and deareſt couples, and mutiny and ſtir up to ſedition the moſt faithfull ſubjects againſt their Prince, if leſs than moral evidence be ſufficient to prove matters of this nature and quality? Wherefore I do not think his Majeſty would ſuffer his Preachers to draw their Pedigree from *Rome*, if he did not perſwade himſelf they were not able to bring ſatisfactory Proofs of their relinquiſhing that Authority; for this were to authorize a Rebellion againſt the Court and State of Conſcience, which hath greater force and power than pure temporal Allegiance, *this* being grounded upon Oath and Duty, both which receive their ſtrength and virtue from Conſcience. If therefore you intend to give me full ſatisfaction in this point, you muſt clearly ſhew me, that the Proteſtants Proofs are inſufficient. Which though I doubt not of, ſeeing our men have ever been ſo ready to buckle with the Proteſtants even upon moſt diſadvantageous conditions, yet I conceive that this cannot be otherwiſe effected, than by experience, bringing them to diſpute together.

Uncle. Dear Colin, I am heartily glad to hear you diſcourſe ſo ſtrongly and ſolidly, it gives me great hopes of your future abilities. But if you will

will have patience, your ſelf ſhall be Judg of my queſtion, nor do I think it needfull to have recourſe to any farther learning, than common ſenſe and natural Reaſon; firſt therefore let us ſee whether

§. 3. *In all likelihood the Catholick Party be the greater, more learned, and more virtuous?*

SUppoſe then you had a Caſe in Law of great difficulty, and that you ſhould conſult in Council a dozen or twenty Lawyers reputed the beſt of the Realm, or at leaſt the worſt of them far beyond your skill to judg whether he were not as able as the beſt; and of theſe twenty, ſeventeen or eighteen of them ſhould ſay, You would infallibly loſe your Cauſe, if you took ſuch and ſuch a courſe in it, the other two or three ſhould conſtantly affirm you would win it, inſomuch that the queſtion would be brought to this conteſtation, whether Lawyers were more learned and skilfull: To which ſide would you adhere in this Caſe?

Nephew. If you ſuppoſe me unable to judg of their skill and learning, and that they be all equally reputed honeſt men, (though indeed I cannot well ſee how they can come to ſuch an obſtinate conteſtation, if they be all as they are reputed) I muſt needs chuſe the multitude, and either adhere to the ſeventeen, or play the fool notoriouſly. I ſee well enough what you aim at, to wit, that becauſe Catholick Countreys are greater than Proteſtants, Judgment therefore is to be given on the Catholicks ſide. But I pray, how ſhall I know that there be more learned men amongſt Catholicks than amongſt Proteſtants? or that the Catholick Doctours be more learned than ours at home? 'Tis true, I know our learned men ſay, that the Proteſtants of other Countreys are not of the ſame Religion with ours here in *England*, yet I ſee they agree all together againſt us, what diſcords ſoever they have amongſt themſelves. *Uncle.*

Uncle. Your freſh wits run too faſt, Remember you were ſuppoſed to be ignorant of the proportion of their learning in your Lawyers caſe, and therefore chuſed the multitude. Wherefore as long as it is conſtantly confeſſed, that there be far more learned men Catholicks than there be learned Proteſtants, ſo long the Lay people, ignorant and unable to judg of learning, muſt ſtand convinced by the multitude, of which this vulgar knows no more but that they are accounted learned by thoſe amongſt whom they live, as ours are here with us. And to give you farther ſatisfaction in this Point, you know that man for man, by all likelihood, Readers of Divinity are the greateſt Scholars, their exerciſe and Profeſſion (ſpecially if they be of many years) enabling and approving them more than others, who have not the like occaſion. Of theſe compare the number which *England* affords to the multitudes which Catholick Countreys yield. You have been in *Paris*, where you might have ſeen in ſome one Houſe or Colledg more than be in all *England*, whereof ſome have taught Divinity a dozen or twenty years, five or ſix actually reading, and as many perhaps, who having ſpent a great part of their age in that Profeſſion, have now given over. I ſpeak no ſecrets, the moſt ignorant man that is may ſee and prove, what I ſay with his own eys, either in *Italy*, *Spain*, *Germany*, *France*, or *Low-countries*. And I may add, that the time, which one of them ſpends in ſtudy, is double to what one in our Univerſities here in *England* doth imploy. Theſe being married men, having care of their wives and children, and are, ſaith S. *Paul*, *divided*, one half to their books, the other to the houſhold; and you know, wives are no friends of books; learning and children ſpring both from the brain, and both require abundance of ſpirits, and therefore not well matched together. And ſure amongſt Catholicks a learned reſolution is rather to be looked for at a Prieſt's hands (ordinarily ſpeaking) than from

There be more learned Catholicks than Proteſtants.

a married man, by reason his time, breeding, and imployment, are more proportioned thereunto. To these learned men now living, you may add all that lived for many ages, not so unlearned as the Protestants perswade themselves, since the very first beginners of Protestancy met with their matches, such as they either did not dare to meet face to face, or if they did, they still came off with dishonour. Wherefore every man, that understands any thing more than his own home, must needs grant, that if number or likelihood of persons may carry the cause, the question is ended. Whereunto I could add that Reason which you mentioned, how the Protestants in divers Countreys are not of *one Religion*, neither in respect of *Belief* or *Government*. They differ in so many Points that they damn one another for misbelievers. Do but examine whether the Positions, wherein they disagree amongst themselves, be not of as main importance, as those wherein we differ from them all, and you shall finde many of them to be the very same. Nay, there be not two *Doctors* or *Parsons* here in *England* of *one Religion*, no, nor two Laymen, who give themselves to expound Scriptures, and make their private spirit Judg of their Belief and *Tenets*. And this, not onely because so many variable fancies, grounded every one upon it self, cannot possibly agree (whereupon you shall hardly see two meet and confer of Religion, but they will disagree, if they talk long) but also because all knowledg hath its unity from some settled and certain Principles, which being not to be found out of the Catholick Church in matters of Religion, there can be no unity of belief amongst Protestants. For although our Parliament hath commanded divers Articles to be taught in the Church of *England*, yet doth not the Protestant Clergy acknowledg, that the Parliament, (who are the flock, and taught by them) hath any power to judg or determine Points of Doctrine. And indeed it were ridiculous for those, who think that

No two Protestants of one Religion.

an universal Congregation of Bishops, and th body of the whole Church may err in belief, should nevertheless attribute this unerrable power to their own Schollars. And they (for ought I know) do constantly maintain their chief ground, *that all men are fallible, and subject to err.* Where, by the way you may note, how hardly they deal with Catholicks in punishing them for professing a different faith from theirs, since, if we believe differently, we must needs profess differently: and they, by their own confession, not having any authority whereby they can or ought force any man to believe as they do, 'tis evident they must per-force contradict their own Principles, if they will persecute us. Now therefore since to be of *one faith*, is to be of one *settled opinion*, and *settling* cannot be without *infallibility* or *necessity*, the Protestants having no common Principles, which themselves esteem infallible, (every man expounding Scripture, *(their onely Rule of faith)* at his pleasure, nor any having power or authority to control anothers interpretation of any passage whatsoever) 'tis impossible any two Ministers should be of *one faith* and *Religion*. 'Tis true, perchance they may be of one minde to day, but ere night, if either of them light upon a place of Scripture, which after more consideration seems to have another sense than he thought before, they may well be of different opinions; and this in what Point how material or essential soever. These men therefore may be said to be sometimes of one minde or opinion, but never of one faith and Religion, Faith being like Marriage, not to be taken up for a year and a day, but for Eternity. And now to return to the discourse we aim at, as the number of our learned men doth far exceed the number of learned Protestants, so likewise by all likelihood doth their learning. The *English* Divinity, gene-

VVhy Protestants ought not force any man to believe with them.

The learned Catholicks be more learned than the learned Protestants.

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rally ſpeaking, is nothing but Controverſies, which are but the fourth or fifth part of Catholick Divinity. For beſides Controverſies, we have ſcholaſtical Theology, which explicates the myſteries of our faith, and ſhews their conformity to nature and natural Reaſon. We have moral Divinity, which ſearches into the practice of the Sacraments and Precepts of good life. We have Scripture Leſſons, which dive into the deep ſenſe of the written Word of God without farther application. We have myſtical Theology, which examines the extraordinary ways of converſation with God. And laſtly, we have Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, which ſhews the progreſs, increaſe, and practice of Chriſtian faith through all ages and places. And of all theſe we have, I do not ſay, Books or Volumes, but whole Libraries written, and extant amongſt us. And for other Eruditions, as Languages, Poetry, Rhetorick, Logick, and Philoſophy, if the Proteſtants have any, let them look into their ſamples, and they ſhall finde the moſt eminent and worthy men to have been and to be Catholicks; ſo that as of all Religions, the Chriſtian, ſo of all Chriſtians, the Catholick is without queſtion the moſt wiſe, and moſt learned Profeſſion. And what I ſay, is not to be ſought out in old Manuſcripts or learned Papers, your eys and ears will tell it you in Catholick Countreys, and even in *Paul's* Church-yard, where you may finde multitudes of Volumes of all theſe ſorts of learning written by Catholicks; and if their Shops were well ſearched, I doubt not but for Books of worth (except ſome *Engliſh* Pamphlets, and a few Controverſies) one hundred for one would be found to have been written by Catholicks. What apparence then can there be, that the Proteſtants Arguments ſhould be ſo mighty, and ſo clearly better, than what Catholicks can ſay for themſelves, as to bear down the right of Antiquity and Poſſeſſion, whereof the Catholicks are the ſole Claimers.

Nephew. I cannot deny, but that your diſcourſe is ſound, and grounded upon common ſenſe,

and upon ſuch evidence, as when I was in Paris heard was there to be ſeen, but my minde was then more fixed upon the *Tennis-Court* than upon ſuch inquiries. But why might not one reply, that all this and more is neceſſary for the juſtifying of ſo evil a quarrel? If Catholicks be not honeſt and virtuous men, the more learned they are, the more dangerous and more able to maintain a falſe Poſition. And 'tis like, the Proteſtants would reply in this manner; for they tell us, that the Pope hath gotten ſo mighty a power over our very underſtandings, that for many ages we have bent all our wits how to maintain his Titles and Decrees, without any care of truth or probability, wherefore the more wit and learning, the more blindneſs of paſſion and intereſt.

Uncle. I did not think that Learning had deſerved ſo ill at your hands, as to cenſure it ſo ſeverely. No, no, Coſin, one man, or two, or three, may be the more dangerous for their Learning, but not whole multitudes. For of its own nature, it is a great inſtrument of virtue, being the companion of truth, ſo that there can be no greater ſign of truth in any Religion, than to ſee it bear the touch of Reaſon, and that the Profeſſours of it be addicted to Learning. Beſides, I pray remember, I ſpeak to one who profeſſeth no ſcholarſhip, and therefore do not inquire what is, or is not, but what is more likely and apparent. It muſt therefore be known, that the Religion is falſe, before it can be preſumed that men bend and ſtrain their learning to maintain a falſity; for otherwiſe the very fame of learning bears with it the credit and eſteem of truth and honeſty; and who delights in learned Labours, is commonly free both from quarrelſome intereſt, & hurtfull pleaſures, out of which ſpring all cunning fraud and circumvention, whereupon a meer Scholar is quit by this very name, from ſuſpition of guile and craftineſs. But howſoever our

As the learned Catholicks are more learned than the learned Proteſtants, ſo they are more virtuous than they.

our Religion hath, besides learning, manifest signs of honesty and virtue. For all the Points wherein we differ from Protestants are of that nature, that they incite us to the practice of some virtue or other. As we say, Charity and the keeping of the Commandments do justifie, and deserve eternal Reward. Confession brings the remembrance and sorrow for our sins, satisfaction is performed by good deeds, Praying for the Dead, Praying to Saints, keeping and reverencing Pictures of *Christ* and his Saints; and above all, the presence of God in the blessed Sacrament; all which be matters of great moment and consideration, continually inciting us to lift up our mindes to God and Heaven, to think of the life to come, and to practice virtuous actions. The most earnest Protestant, who hath but cast his eye beyond the sea, cannot deny but there's a main difference in exteriour Devotion amongst *Catholicks* above *Protestants*. Our Churches are open every day, Service and Masses said all the forenoon, and in divers there is Service a great part of the afternoon. Our Service is much longer than the Protestants. Our Ceremonies and magnificence very spectable. Our Sacraments more in number, more frequented, and done with more State and Reverence. The Riches of our Churches, Altars, Pictures, inestimable. Our Solemnities and Triumphs glorious. Perpetual Sermons on Festival-days, and on every day in *Lent* and *Advent*, the blessed Sacrament often exposed with great concourse of devout People, as all Protestant Travellers can witness. Add to these the multitude of Religious men and women, whose Profession is retired from businesses and the world, to have more time to converse with God. The often Miracles, the frequent Saints and holy men, that cannot be denied, but at least we think and say, we have them. In a word, the Protestant's faith seems like a *Piece of Money buried in the ground*, and the Catholicks like a *burning Torch*, which forceth all within its Sphere to cast their eys upon it. I know the ready answer is, that all is but hypocrisie, and

that there is as great wickedneſs amongſt Catholicks as amongſt Proteſtants. But I could wiſh that he who is thus raſh, and ready to ſay this, were as curious and carefull to know how to prove it. For it were abſurd to think, that who ſtrikes but one blow in twenty in a Smiths ſhop ſhould make as great a dint as he who ſtrikes twenty. And ſurely, no leſs fooliſh it were to think, that whoſe hearts and hands are continually buſied about God and godly things, ſhould make no greater impreſſion in their ſouls, than they who ſay not a Prayer once a moneth, and whoſe chiefeſt Devotion is to hear a man make a pleaſing diſcourſe in a Pulpit. I will not deny, but that there be as foul ſinners, and as many, amongſt Catholicks as amongſt Proteſtants, if not more, and more wicked. For Sacriledg cannot be ſo great where Sanctity is leſs, and who beſt knows his Maſters will muſt needs deſerve moſt ſtripes for his treſpaſs. No man could damn his Poſterity, but who had original juſtice to loſe, nor could any betray *Chriſt*, but who had eaten bread at his Table. Wherefore *Proteſtants* cannot be ſo wicked as *Catholicks*, having not ſuch a ſaintly faith, nor ſuch a ſacred Church to diſgrace & abuſe. Yet I do not think, but that a good Argument may be made for our Church by its ſanctity, remembring well what an *Engliſh* Proteſtant Clergy-man of note, who had been at *Rome* after his converſion, was wont to ſay, when he heard any ſpeak againſt the vices of the Court of *Rome*; I have known (quoth he) many and many of the Proteſtant Clergy as honeſt men as ever I met withall in my life, in whoſe hands I durſt venture my eſtate and life, but I never knew any, who had the Reputation and Eſteem amongſt wiſe men to be a Saint, or of extraordinary holineſs. Here in *Rome* I ſee in a ſmall number of great Prelats two or three that have the fame of extraordinary virtue, and the like I finde of all ſorts both of Church-men and Layety, ſome to be reputed exemplarly holy. As for the vices, whereof I hear the Reports, and doubt not but they are too true, yet I ſee they are car-

carried discreetly, and break not forth into any publick scandal. So that although *Protestants* have divers moral honest men, and *Catholicks* many wicked, yet it follows not, that they are equal in behaviour: for Catholicks have some Saints, Protestants none; Catholicks faults are in proportion fewer, Protestants good works very defective in the like proportion: and this difference is such an one as worthily makes a mark of the Catholick Church, and as indeed is befitting a Church made of men, who bear immortal souls in vessels of flesh and bloud.

The Popes spiritual Power is no tyranny but was ever the same.

But I had almost forgot the difficulty you made of the Pope's tyrannizing and forcing all mens wits to serve him. Do you think he tyrannizes the bodies or the mindes? If the mindes, then he hath perswaded them his Power is lawfull, given by *Jesus Christ*, and continued since his time; wherefore these men (who are thus perswaded, being so many, so learned, and withall so upright, as that for conscience sake they will forgo the very liberty of their understandings) make a great Argument, that the truth is as they say: for otherwise how easie were it for a King of *France*, or *Spain*, or *Emperour* to follow the example of *England*, *Holland*, and divers States of *Germany*, who would aid and back them if they would renounce this pretended tyranny; whereas these Revolters from the Church of *Rome* did it without any present Example, nay, with the detestation of all their neighbours. Besides, all the Popes names and actions are registred, if they did any thing of note, if they changed but their attire, consecrated a Bishop, sent a Cardinals Cap, or the like, all is upon Record; onely this action of conquering the whole world in the way of an universal Father, of setting this spiritual Throne not onely above Kings, and Monarchs, Bishops, and Patriarchs, but even above the wisdom of the Sages, and above the valour of undaunted courages, this onely (I say) by all Historians must have

have been accounted unworthy of mention. But remember, Cosin, that common sense teaches us, that a thing so much against the general current of the publick Church of *Christ* for so many ages, ought to be well proved, according to the Rule you granted me even now, before it pass without controul.

Nephew. Truly, Sir, me thinks you speak with reason & common sense. Yet this authority being so great, I see not, why it may not of it self, and and by its instruments work such an effect, as that learned men (upon whose number I am to rely) may not become partially affected in the judgment of Religion, and consequently the greater number be more corrupted than the lesser, and so the opinion of three were to be preferred before the opinion of seventeen. Nay, in my judgment experience tells us, that not every tenth person amongst learned Catholicks knows the true value and force of our Adversaries Arguments, but with a prepossessed disposition undervalue them, when perhaps they cannot give a full and satisfactory answer thereunto. And how should it be otherwise, since from our childhood we are taught to rely upon the Church for matters of Religion, and to reject and hate any man, who should seek to make a contrary impression in us. This being planted in us in our tender age, and growing with nature, cannot chuse but make a great preoccupation in us, when we come to be able to judg of Controversies in Religion. Nor is it to the purpose, whether it be fit that we have such an impression or no, for I oppose not the thing, but the Argument, which urges for the greater number of learned men.

Uncle. And have you not marked the like amongst *Protestants*, and much more amongst Puritans? And do you not finde that those who slight Catholick Arguments, are no less prejudicated than the Catholicks you speak of? Nay, if you mark it, the greatest contemners of their Adversaries Arguments, be they Catholicks or Protestants, are commonly the most zealous, or rather

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the most ignorant of the zealous. So that indeed the true cause of this partiality is ignorance, and not any prohibition, which contrariwise is a great provoker to make men doubt of their Religion. For ever since our Grand-mother *Eve* hearkened to the first [*Why did God?*] all Precepts (whose Reason we understand not) have been suspicious unto us. Tell me then, I pray, if you were in a ship where there were a Pilot and his Mate, and some Captain, who had never been at sea before, and in a controversie about their journey they fall to variance, the Pilot and his Mate saying, This is the way, the Captain by Reports or Ghesses of his own, says, that's not the way; and thereupon the Company in the ship takes parts, whether side in this case would you judg to be partial?

Nephew. 'Tis clear, that those, who joyn with the Captain are partial; for where the one side hath skill, the other none, 'tis evident, that if the question be of skill, we ought adhere to the skilfull. This (I say) is evident, if there be no particular circumstance, or special Reason to the contrary, as in our case, if the Pilot had some interest to carry his ship out of the way, then it were another matter, but standing precisely in the terms of your case, 'tis clear on which side the partiality is; for the Pilot, having skill, the Captain none, the Pilot's advice were to be preferred in common sense, and to side with him were wisdom.

Uncle. Why then, who adhere to unskilfull Judgers in matters of Religion, are partial; and who adhere to expert in those matters, are wise and rational. Wherefore if the seventeen adhere to the Mistris and Teacher of Religion, and the three fly from her, Do not these by this very act make themselves partial, and those impartial? You must first know whether side goes the right way, before you can suppose either side to be partial, and consequently the number will still prevail, as long as 'tis in doubt whether side is partial; and if one side adhere to that part which was in prepossession, the other plead against possession,

you are bound by the Law of Nature, by the inſtitution of all communities, and by common ſenſe to judg the Pleaders againſt Poſſeſſion to be partial, untill they have proved their motion ſo reaſonable, as will over-balance the great authority of Poſſeſſion, which is againſt them. Farther if you conſider that Chriſtian Religion is *ſupernatural*, that is, ſuch an one as cannot be learned but from Almighty God, to wit, from the Apoſtles, or from them whom the Apoſtles or their Diſciples have taught, you will ſee, that there is no diſputing about Religion, but onely to ask what hath been taught us, which none can tell us, but thoſe whoſe Life and Profeſſion it is to teach us that Doctrine, which themſelves firſt learned, to wit, the Biſhops and Paſtours of the Church. So that who doubts of what theſe men have taught, and do teach us, muſt needs be ignorant of the means and way of knowing Chriſtian Doctrine, and paſſionately refuſe the true and certain Rule thereof.

Nephew. I ſee mine *errour*, and it was the ſame, as if one ſhould condemn a man of partiality, who keeps poſſeſſion of his own, becauſe he yields not up the Eſtate, whereof he is poſſeſſed before judgment be given againſt him; whereas contrariwiſe in the Civil Law (which I once ſtudied a little) if one be put out of quiet poſſeſſion, his Adverſary may not plead untill he be put in again. And ſure of all caſes, the fouleſt is to doubt in matters of Religion, before one hath Reaſon; for where Authority is plainly on the one ſide, there none can doubt without wronging that Authority, unleſs he have a Reaſon that doth over-balance it. And ſo I am ſatisfied in this Point.

Uncle. Take this with you, Nephew, that generally no Controverſies about Religion fall out without ſome motives of intereſt on both ſides, and ſo both ſides may be ſuſpected of partiality, but chiefly that which begins the change. Wherefore ſuppoſe men were forbidden to doubt, that would be of little force, if once they ſaw their

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Commanders were interessed, unless they saw withall that they could not mend themselves. Besides, in our Schools all things are called in question, which would not be suffered, if it endangered the Churches belief. Lastly, since 'tis great Scholars that govern mens judgments, if they did finde by their Learning any other sure Ground of Religion, *than standing to the Churches Authority and judgment*, they would esteem as much of her Commands, as *Sampson* did of the *Philistims* shutting their Gates upon him. And so we see by experience, that all truly learned and unpassionate men on our side (besides the motive of the Churches Authority) adhere upon pure Reason to the Catholick *Tenets*, and will protest upon all that's holy, that they would be of the same Religion, though there were no Command, finding it most conformable to Reason, and to the Grounds of Christianity.

Nephew. The truth is, I know not how to answer your discourse, yet perhaps a *Protestant* would say, that all's but probability and likelihood, and therefore to hazard a man's Estate upon *Peradventures* were something hard, and not very rationally done. Wherefore I should be glad to conceive more fully.

§. 4. *The force and efficacy of these your Discourses and Perswasions.*

Uncle. WHat security do your Merchants, your Statesmen, your Souldiers, those that go to Law, nay, even those that till their Grounds, and Work for their Livings, What security, I say, do all these go upon? Is it greater than the security which these Grounds afford? Surely, no. And yet no man esteems them fooliſh. All human affairs are hazardous, and have some adventure in them. And therefore who requires evident certainty onely in matters of Religion, discovers in himself a less minde to the Goods promised in the next life, than to these which he seeks here in this world up-

on weaker assurance. How soever the greatest evidence that can be to him that is not capable of convincing demonstrations (which the greatest part of mankinde fall short of) is but conjectural; for men do not generally distinguish betwixt a solid and a witty proof, and are as soon taken with a Gloss or jesting speech, as with a demonstration. Let but this very proof I have told you be put to some two men, the one more, the other less judicious, and the one perhaps will hold it for evident, the other onely for apparent and likely. And certainly, it is manifest, that if our Church was once the true Church, they, who made a breach from hers must needs have evident proofs of her corruption, or else be culpable of Faction and Schisme. And yet of these two men I propose, the one peradventure will take this Argument onely for plausible, and at the least check forgo it, the other (looking into the nature of Government, and seeing what a flaw the contrary Position breeds in it, and how in effect it destroys all Government) will think it so strong, that whatsoever is or can be said against it, is but the playing of wit against pure evidence. Farther, if we *Catholicks* hold the truth of Scripture as conscientiously as any *Protestant*, and therefore that all Controversies betwixt us and them are onely concerning the sense of it, and not touching the truth of it, 'tis manifest that *Catholicks* must either be such dull Dunces as not to understand their Arguments, or so wilfull as not to acknowledg what they see and know; otherwise surely, they would agree with *Protestants* in all Points, which they could convince and demonstrate. And again this man, who pierceth deeper into the strength of this Argument, sees, that although sometimes Learning may fail, and that Virtue may have a Bridle for a while, yet would not Learning be Learning, if it should not for the most part work its effects in men, and make them more capable of Reason than others: and much less can it be true Virtue, which is seldom efficacious, since Virtues nature

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is to be *operative*. Wherefore this understanding man, that sees that there is a more constant pursuit of Virtue and Learning on the one side than on the other, concludes evidently, that there can be no extraordinary weakness on the learned and more virtuous side in comparison of the other. And where he sees more means, pains, and fruits of Learning and Virtue on the one side, than on the other, he will no more doubt, (supposing this to be a constant and settled course on both sides) but that of necessity there must be more Learning and Virtue on that side where he sees these effects; no more, I say, than he can doubt whether necessary causes will have their effects, as whether Fire and Towe put together will burn; or whether effects can be without their causes, as houses, clocks, and the like, without Carpenters, Smiths, and other Artizans. Yet perhaps, he that barely looks upon the superficies of this discourse, takes it onely for a pleasing and probable consequence. Joyn to this the multitudes of Antiquity, (I mean those Ages wherein the *Protestants* acknowledg the Reign of Popery) and surely then there will not remain to an understanding man any just cause to fear or complain of hazard, but rather a great occasion to admire and praise Gods wisdom, who hath provided so short and secure a means for every man, who is so happy and carefull as to acknowledg and imbrace this Guide of eternal salvation, looking with an eye of commiseration upon those, whose dispositions being not fitted to the sight of this truth, remain in doubt and ignorance, by diving into questions, wherein they are not able to finde satisfaction, and so cast themselves away, not for want of means, but either through their own Pride, or by the misleading of their Directours, who not seeing what's convenient for the dispositions of their Disciples, throw them upon the Rocks, instead of giving them a fit harbour to anchor in; for if they would rely upon this plain and open way of our discourse, common sense would tell them (if not what's true) at least what they ought to follow, and

that as clearly, as that two and three are five.

Nephew. I confeſs, the Evidence you plead is great; yet me thinks one might object, that ſince we hear it ſo often, and ſo ſtrongly beaten into us, that all men are fallible, and that Nature it ſelf ſeems to teach the ſame, therefore as on the one ſide your Reaſons force me to grant, that 'tis the wiſer courſe to venter this way; ſo on the other, I ſtill remain with this diſpoſition, that it may peradventure be falſe, which is able to ſhake a mans Reſolution, and cool his affection.

Uncle. Coſin, you deſire great matters, and peradventure more than your age and wavering diſpoſition is able to bear. Yet to comply with your good deſires, I will put you in the way, if you will have patience to follow the track, and you ſhall ſee,

§. 5. *That it is no hard matter that* Chriſt's *Law ſhould have deſcended entire unto us.*

FIrſt therefore tell me, I pray, what time think you, *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles imployed in preaching the Goſpel in any one Countrey?

Nephew. I know *Chriſt* imployed ſome three years and a half, or thereabouts; for I think, the time is not preciſely agreed upon by Chronologers: but for the Apoſtles, that I know not, nor can I gheſs to what purpoſe you ask me this queſtion.

Uncle. Is it not like the Apoſtles beſtowed near about as much time? S. *Paul* himſelf ſays ſo, telling the Clergy of *Epheſus*, that for three years he had not ceaſed day and night to exhort them with tears, and warn them to take heed of falſe Teachers. And we may well think the like of the reſt of the Apoſtles, whereſoever they could conveniently do it, but ſpecially in the Churches in which they made their Reſidence. But why think you took they ſo much time for ſo ſhort a Doctrine, as you ſee Chriſtian Doctrine is, being included in our Creed?

Nephew.

Nephew. No doubt but their imployment was to make their Disciples and the People understand perfectly, and fully comprehend all Points of Christian Doctrine, to resolve all doubts and difficulties, to make the apprehension of the Doctrine sink into the very souls of the People, and to settle a Form of Government and Conversation, and to inure the first Christians to the practice of this Doctrine, whereby it might subsist and continue as long as possibly it could. For this I see is the *Dictamen* of prudence and wisdom in such a case, and the course of all those, who found new institutions.

Uncle. You say well, And surely such a time, for a little Province of about two or three days journeys semidiameter, was very sufficient for the instructing of their Disciples in all material Points, and settling of instructers to succeed them. But in case immediately after the decease or departure of the Apostle there should arise (according to our Saviours forewarning) *false Prophets* or *ravenous VVolves*, under pretence of sanctity, endeavouring to devour the flock, nay, that even some amongst themselves out of vanity should begin some new Doctrine, drawing Disciples after them, and so making themselves Head of a Party, and of a Doctrine, contrary to that which the Apostles had taught, urging Reasons out of Nature, and Texts out of that Apostles own Writings, by whom they were taught, or out of his fellow Apostles, and strengthen his Party by the adherence of many of the weaker sort, what, I say, would the Governours and Teachers of the faithfull do in this case? How would they behave themselves to hinder the ruine of their weaker Brethren?

How Controversies were decided immediately after the Apostles.

Nephew. I do imagine that meeting together they would examine this new Doctrine, *taking for their Rule* that Doctrine, which the Apostle delivered unto them, and knowing, that he could neither contradict himself, nor any of his Brethren,

being all inſpired by the holy Ghoſt, they would conclude, that the Innovatours Reaſons were captious, his Texts miſ-underſtood, if they were obſcure, or corrupted, if plain. For nothing could be ſo evident unto them as that, which for three years together had been perpetually beaten into them, wherein they had been continually examined and cleared, and which had been ſo long the foundation of their new manner of life and practice; ſo that, this muſt needs be the moſt evident unto them of all things, and therefore they would ſurely forgo all other Rules, to govern themſelves by this, as being moſt free from error.

Uncle. Your Concluſion follows plainly. For they having no other ſtay of their belief, than that S. *Paul* (for example) had taught them ſo, 'tis clear, that to them theſe two queſtions were but one, *whether the opinion propoſed was true?* and *whether it was according to what S.* Paul *had taught them?* And therefore to be againſt that, which had been taught unto them, was to be falſe. So that there neither was nor could be any other queſtion in the Church at that time in matters of faith, but *whether the Apoſtles had taught ſuch a Doctrine or no?* For the Apoſtles having ſpent ſo much time in teaching Chriſtian Doctrine in ſo little a Province, what they had not taught muſt needs be preſumed not to be neceſſary, and conſequently not deſerving to make a Schiſme and breach amongſt Chriſtians, and what they had taught to be without all controverſie true and certain. Wherefore if ſuch an Innovatour would not ſtand to this judgment, he was to be expelled the Church, as diſagreeing from the Chriſtians in the *principal Rule* and *ſovereign Tribunal of Chriſtianity*, by *which*, and *onely which*, they could at that time diſcern and decide what was Chriſtian Doctrine, what not. Happy that Age, in which it was ſo eaſie to reſolve any difficulty ariſing; for it was no more than to meet together, and aſk one another, *How have you been taught?* and all was ended; and who ſhould have reſiſted this de-

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ciſion was to be caſt out with common conſent, as a Reprobate. But tell me, Coſin, How long do you think this *Happineſs* continued in the Church.

Nephew. For the time of the Apoſtles and of their Diſciples (who are commonly called Apoſtolical men) there's no queſtion to be made; no nor of the age of theſe Diſciples of theſe Apoſtolical men; to whom I ſee not why I may not add yet another age, for doubtleſs thoſe Apoſtolical men muſt needs have been of that Reputation, as that whatſoever was conſtantly remembred to have been their Doctrine, was likewiſe to be eſteemed the Doctrine of the Apoſtles their Maſters, ſuppoſing it was known to be univerſally and generally theirs, and not the opinion of ſome one or two of them onely.

Uncle. And will it be a ſtumbling block unto you if we add yet another deſcent, to wit, of the Grand-children of theſe Apoſtolical men, for the memory of publick and generally practiced things is freſh from Grand-fathers unto their Grand-children. So that this degree or golden age may well conſiſt of five deſcents, that is, of ſome two hundred years, allowing fourty years to a deſcent, which is not much, ſince Witneſſes of ſixty years are ordinarily found in every buſineſs in the ſame Province, and therefore where the queſtion is of a publick and univerſal practice, which concerns many Countreys and Nations, which have intercourſe and communication together, ſuch Witneſſes may be much more eaſily found. But what ſhall we ſay of the next enſuing Age?

Nephew. I conceive that theſe deſcents you ſpeak of may eaſily have reached to *Conſtantine's* time, when Chriſtian Religion being publick, the multitude of Fathers and Writers would ſupply the defect of this ἀυτοψία or ſelf-ſeeing into the well ſpring of Chriſtianity. But whether you drive that way or no, I know not.

Uncle. It is not needfull, for ſince the laſt age doth directly know what was the Apoſtles Doctrine; all ſuch ages, as can reach to know the Doctrine and practice of that laſt age, are able

certainly to resolve (though in a lower degree) any arising difficulty; not because they can immediately tell, that such a Point is contrary to the Doctrine of the Apostles, but because they can tell that 'tis against the Doctrine of the fifth descent, which Doctrine they know to be the Doctrine of the Apostles. Wherefore upon the like Ground we may add five descents more, which, according to our former computation, will make up four hundred years, and peradventure by extent may reach to five or six hundred years after *Christ*, that is, to the second conversion of Nations, I mean to the conversion of those barbarous People, which overrun the *Roman* Empire, and brought almost all the World back unto the formerly extirpated Paganisme.

Nephew. Why then, we need no more, for the *Protestants* confess that Popery hath reigned since *Phocas* his time; nay, they stick not to say, that *Gregory* the Great was the last good and first bad Pope, seeming to think that from him began, *that* which they call Popery. And truly, in his Dialogues which are set out in *English*, there's more than enough to shew that the Religion of his time was the same which we now profess; and we, that have our conversion from him (according to venerable *Bede*) and are descended from the *Saxons*, never have had any Religion but *that* which the Protestants call *Popery*; and therefore to us *English* men, it is most clear, that we never had any Religion since *Gregory* the Great's time, but *Popery*. And therefore if the Religion that then reigned was the faith of the Apostles, it will evidently follow, that *Popery* was their faith.

Uncle. Surely, not onely Writers, but even Records and Monuments are so thick since the conversion of those Nations, which overran the *Roman* world, that no perverse man can require more evidence; and surely it was God's providence, who settled, as it were, a new world, and purged the old, whilest Religion could yet look back and see her Head, as it were, with one view. But I hoped you would have induced a farther con-

consequence, and applyed the Arguments to later Ages.

Nephew. I am afraid these calculations may over-reach me, for I see the father and the sons age do concur in some part, and therefore by counting them severally, the number of years will be greater, than indeed ought to be allowed.

Vncle. You say well, and therefore we will onely take that number of years, which the father ordinarily lives before the birth of his son; as if the son be supposed to be twenty years of age, when the father testifies, and the father sixty, which you see is very common, and so the number of years of one descent will be fourty, which is the number we put. But if the father be eighty when the son is twenty, then the number of one descent will be sixty; which though it be somewhat great, because it is rare that a man hath a childe at sixty, yet 'tis not so rare but a thousand may be found in a competent extent, as in the Kingdom of *England*, and this number is amply sufficient for the effect we desire; for five descents of sixty years, make three hundred years. And having told you how a general practice of any Countrey is known by a kinde of *self seeing* for five descents, which includes at least two hundred years, it will follow, that counting down from *Christ's* time to ours by two ages at a time, we may frame our discourse thus. As those who lived in the beginning of the third age could certainly know they held the Apostles Doctrine; so those who lived in the beginning of the fifth age, could certainly know they held the Doctrine of those of the beginning of the third age, that is, the Doctrine of the Apostles. And by the like consequence, those of the seventh age will be certain they are in the same faith of those of the fifth, and those of the ninth in the faith of those of the seventh. And so to our very selves. And all are certain that they are in the faith of the Apostles. The Reason of this Consequence is, because two ages is not so great a space, but that certain knowledg of publick and general changes through a

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Kingdom (much more through many) may be eaſily had; nor yet are two ages ſo little, as that great errour could lurk unſeen, and lie ſmothered for ſo long a time. We therefore, who now live in communion with the *Roman* Church, know certainly, that our forefathers of the ſixteenth and fifteenth ages did conceive and think, that this Faith and Doctrine, which we hold, deſcended unto them from the Apoſtles; and we know likewiſe that they could not conceive and think ſo, but that they knew the fourteenth and thirteenth ages did believe the ſame; nor thoſe of the fourteenth and thirteenth Ages could not have the ſame belief, unleſs they had ſeen and received it, *in* and *from* the twelfth and the eleventh Age. And putting all theſe together, (the certainty whereof is immediately founded in this our Age) you ſee they comprehend ſix Ages, if we put fourty years to a deſcent, and will comprehend eight or nine Ages, if we put ſixty to a deſcent: ſo that two, or at moſt three ſuch compoſitions, will reach beyond *Chriſt's* Birth; and therefore we neither do nor can want evidence, but eys to ſee it.

Nephew. Your diſcourſe will be good, ſuppoſing the Point in controverſie be ſome publick and great matter, or a notorious change in the face of Gods Church. But why might not ſome ſpeculative Point creep in without being taken notice of, ſuch as was the point of the *Arrians* or *Pelagians*, if there had not happen'd withall ſo great an oppoſition and quarrelling, as ſhaked almoſt the whole Church.

Uncle. There be two Reaſons why no Point of Chriſtian Doctrine can be ſo ſmall as to creep in without a great change. The one is becauſe Chriſtian Doctrine, is a Diſcipline whoſe parts are ſo knit together as that one thred cannot be broken but it will ravel through many ſtitches; as from the *Arrian* Hereſie, denying *Chriſt* to be God, it would follow, *no Trinity*, and ſo

Why no new Point can creep into the Church without a great change.

Chriſtians

Christians would easily become natural Philosophers and Pagans; *no Incarnation*, that is, no God and man in one Person. *All the Prayers and Adorations, which the Church had used hitherto, were to be changed; the Form of Baptisme were to be altered:* and thus we must go through the most part of Christian Doctrine, if we look into the sequels of *Arianisme*. And such like consequences may be deduced out of *Pelagianisme*, and out of almost all other Heresies, which have not run beyond all face of Christianity, because they were quickly opposed, and so hindered from shewing the Serpents tail which lurked behinde. The other Reason is, because no new Doctrine can prevail in the Church of God without impeaching *Tradition*, the Rule of faith; for that being once broken and rejected, by the same Right and Principle, by which they profess one Errour, they may profess any; and you see the Disciples of Heresiarchs never fail to grow worse than their Masters; *Luther* broke the ice, by appealing to Scripture, *Zuinglius* went farther than he, the *Anabaptists* exceeded the *Zuinglians*, the *Adamites* passed the *Anabaptists*, the *Socinians* the *Adamites*, and some went beyond Christianity, others even beyond common sense; wherefore it is impossible any breach should be made in the Church, without a main and notorious change in the whole face of Christianity.

Nephew. I see now, Uncle, it was not without cause you asked me, what time the Apostles imployed in teaching Christian Doctrine to some one Province or Countrey, your whole discourse seems to depend on this, that the Apostles did not barely tell the faithfull what *Christ* had done and taught, but did inculcate and beat into them both by words and actions, inuring them to the practice of their belief, their belief being the ground of their actions, and their actions the effects of their belief, and therefore could not be altered without a great change both in their faith and practice, their belief maintaining their practice, and their practice strengthening their belief. And

truly I see this is a connatural way to keep Religion uncorrupted, & that nature, and necessity, drove the first Christians, upon occasion of any controversie, to seek what the Apostle had taught, which being once begun, the ensuing Christians would follow the same course, as long as Controversies could be resolved this way, which by your discourse may be done at this day. But I learned in Philosophy, that *à Posse ad Esse* is no good Argument, for if it were sufficient to prove a thing hath been done, because it could have been done, no man would be innocent, but who is impotent: and therefore I fear we are not much advanced, unless you can shew me.

§. 6. *That if Christ's Law could have been conserved, it hath been conserved.*

Uncle. WHy so, Nephew, you know if any man be accused, his denial clears him sufficiently, untill proof be brought against him. And when it is brought, 'tis yet sufficient for his defence to shew, it doth not convince, which if he can do, the Law lays no hold of him. And shall not the claim of so great a part of the world standing in possession, and maintaining the innocency of the Church be heard and esteemed good, untill the adverse Party hath made his Proofs clear and evident against them? Surely you have forgotten your Resolution concerning your wives honour, for whom you were so earnest but now. Again, we must surely conceit the Church to be a thing planted by Almighty God with no less blessing, than *that* which he gave to Men and Beasts at their Creation, whereby they have been conserved to this day; for since our Redemption cost him no less than our Creation, we cannot esteem his *Blessing of continuance* to be of less worth and virtue in the one, than in the other. And 'tis much more easie to conceive how the Church is and may be continued, than how mankinde hath been and will be conserved, whereof I think no man doubts. And truly

truly do but conſider how unequal and unjuſt a condition it is, that the claim of the preſent Church ſhall not be heard, unleſs ſhe can confute all the *Peradventures* that wit may invent, and ſolve all the Arguments, which the infinite variety of time, place, and occaſions may have given way unto; and then you will ſee how unreaſonable an Adverſary he is, who will not be content with any ſatisfaction, but ſuch as mans nature ſcarcely affords. Yet to anſwer fully your maxime, firſt I will oppoſe another unto it, and by comparing them, we ſhall better underſtand the meaning of them both. And 'tis that *Fruſtra eſt potentia quæ nunquam reducitur ad actum*: whereunto we may add that God, the Authour of Nature, never made any thing in vain; ſo that when the ſame power or poſſibility is ordained for divers effects or ends, then if any of its effects be brought to paſs, it hath ſo far at leaſt got its end, as that it cannot be ſaid to have been made in vain; and therefore 'tis no good Argument, to argue from the power or poſſibility to any one of its effects in particular, becauſe its end may be ſufficiently obſerved by another effect. But if the power or poſſibility have but one effect, then your firſt maxime fails, by reaſon of the ſecond; for being the power hath but one effect, if *that* be not put, the power muſt needs be in vain. Wherefore putting ſuch a poſſibility, leſt it ſhould be fruſtrate, you muſt needs put the effect, and conſequently the Argument is ſtill good, there is a power or poſſibility, therefore an effect. And this follows moſt clearly in our caſe, for if Almighty God have ſet cauſes, which may and can make his Church eternal, that is, if he have put a power or poſſibility of *eternal duration* in his Church, this effect, to wit, *everlaſting continuance*, being of ſuch a nature, that it can be but one, 'tis evident, that either this effect will follow, or elſe the poſſibility is fruſtrate and put to no end, which conſequence in a work of ſuch moment, (as being the very aim and end of all Gods works) were more than abſurd in common ſenſe to grant. And to

declare this more particularly, let us consider that where there are many varieties, that which causeth defect in one, causeth abundance in another. As if in divers Countreys under several Climates, there be long drought or rain, the drought in *Spain* will cause want of Corn here in *England*, and in the *Low-Countreys* a great Harvest: and contrariwise, much wet here causeth dearth, in *Spain* and *Affrick* plenty. So likewise the Catholick faith being dispersed through many several Countreys, what in one Countrey makes it fail, in another will make it flourish. The feud betwixt *France* and *Spain* made *Luther's* proceedings to be favoured in *Germany* by the Princes that leaned to the *French*, and the same feud made *Spain* and *Italy* oppose them more earnestly. The Power and Authority of some one man in one Countrey may oppress the Church, whereas in another, even to discountenance that man, it shall be upheld. And as in place, so in time, divers occasions make it so favoured, now misliked, but 'tis impossible, it being truth, and conformable to Reason, that there should be any so general and universal occasion as to make it hated in all times and places, which would be necessary for a total ruine. And this is it, which maintains all the progress of Nature, to wit, because it hath Roots and Principles in being; for no one sort of living things, which have being in many far different Climates, can be exterminated, by reason the contraries, which must destroy it, are neither universal in place nor time, and therefore those contraries being spent, the seeds of Nature recover themselves, sprout out, and bud again new branches of the same kinde. So it fares with Christian Belief and Doctrine, which because it is so like, and so connatural to Nature, all its opposites must needs be against Nature, and violent, and consequently not durable; which being gone, then must of necessity those, in whose hearts Religion is rooted, blossom again, and bring forth such delightfull savours and fruits,

Why Christian faith cannot be destroyed.

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as will draw and attract mens souls, and spread it self amongst the multitudes, from whom it had been violently banished. Wherefore that the Church in this or that time, be oppressed, is a thing within the compass of Natures mutability; but that in all Countreys, and at all times, it should be oppressed to death surpasseth the power of mutable causes, which were not mutable, if they should so long, and in so different circumstances ever have the same effect; yea, Nature it self and its Authour would be overcome, if such long violence could so oppress it as to extinguish it, it being Natures chief flower and greatest treasure planted by the express handy work of the omnipotent, and wise framer thereof.

Nephew. Your discourse seems good, for I see that men, who in a case of great importance will not be content with what is proportional to their capacity, but seek a certitude so great as themselves are not capable to judg of, being not beaten to those sciences in which such certainty is usual, those men, I say, must needs come short of what they desire, if truly they do desire it: for I believe, the affection of wealth, pleasure, or some fore-made judgment doth carry them against the simple and plain direction of free Reason. However, Uncle, since it was so easie for the Church to have been conserved entire in faith, me thinks it should not be hard to shew in effect and in particular from age to age, that it hath been conserved.

Uncle. If we could prove, that Bishops, either in General or National Councils had once in two or three hundred years taken care, that no corruptions should be introduced, this might be effected, but that depends upon Books and History, which you and I will not now meddle withall.

Nephew. I believe those Histories are not so doubtfull, but that generally Protestants do and will acknowledg them. And by my poor skill I know that there never passed three hundred years since *Christ's* time without a Council, and without condemning some Heretick, so that 'tis clear, the

Church hath had ſufficient care in this kinde. Yet becauſe I have heard your ſelf complain of the ſloth of men, who ſeek not into the Grounds of Sciences, and often ſay, that far more than is, might be known, if the Principles were rightly laid for it, and the way trodden, nay, that all Gods works hang ſo together by connexion of Cauſes and Effects, as that there is no Effect, whoſe Cauſe by diligence might not be found. I muſt therefore intreat you to condeſcend a little even to the hardneſs of thoſe mens hearts, who require more in this ſubject than in any other, and ſeek the cauſe, why the Church and faith of *Chriſt* cannot fail. For ſince we have found by experience theſe ſixteen hundred years, that it hath not ſo failed, as that it hath not been generally and univerſally viſible, and hath both dured and flouriſhed thus long, ſurely it hath ſome forcible Cauſe, and indeed ſuch an one, as can never fail, but will ſtill work the ſame Effect; and this were to ſhew,

§. 7. *That no great Errour could creep into the Church of God.*

Uncle. COſin, you lay too hard a task upon me, Who knows why the world hath dured thus long? Or why mankinde was not extinct many years ſince? And muſt I tell you, why Gods Church hath not, nor cannot fail? I am aſhamed to anſwer every licentious Brain, the Negatives of a witty Naturaliſt may poſe the moſt learned Chriſtian upon earth. Yet to content you, I will endeavour above my ſtrength; but you muſt eaſe me a little, and anſwer me to what your ſelf ſees evident. Firſt, you know that the Church, being the Congregation of the faithfull, cannot fail but by the loſs of faith; and faith may be loſt two ways, by Ignorance, or by Errour. For ſo we ſee a particular, who once had faith, if he come to loſe it, 'tis either by negligence and not conning it, and ſo forgets it; or elſe he is diſſwaded from it, and induced to believe

lieve ſome different Doctrine. So likewiſe to a multitude of men the one or the other muſt needs happen, or elſe they cannot be deprived of the faith they once had. And becauſe pure ignorance is a meer Negative, or not knowing, the firſt queſtion I will ask you, is, *VVhether you think a People, once inſtructed in any Religion, can ſo forget it, as that they fall not into ſome other Religion, but live quite without any Religion at all?*

Nephew. Truly I think it impoſſible, both becauſe I never heard of any Nation that had no Religion at all, no not the *Cannibals*; as alſo becauſe I have heard that abſurd Religions have continued from father to ſon for many Generations together, and never leſt untill another Religion was brought in, and then too with much ado, the People being loth to be drawn from their former belief. Yet if one ſhould confidently ſay the contrary, I do not know how to convince him.

Uncle. You muſt look into the cauſes which make men religious, and if you finde them to be univerſal and perpetual, you may be ſure that all ſorts of Peoples have ſome Religion in them, though more or leſs according as theſe cauſes are more or leſs in force amongſt them. But let us know, Can you tell me what is Religion in general, as it is common to both true and falſe? *VVhy all People have ſome Religion.*

Nephew. I imagine Religion to be a conceit or perſwaſion of the People concerning one, or more, excellent natures, which govern humane life, giving us thoſe goods which of our ſelves we cannot attain unto, and inflicting upon us thoſe pains, whereof we know not the cauſes; and this perſwaſion reacheth alſo to the manner and form of pleaſing this or theſe Governours or Commanders, whereby to obtain *goods* and avoid *evils*. And the Reaſon why I make this conceit of Religion is, becauſe I ſee theſe things are in all ſorts of Religion, and all Authours, which write of the Religion of what *VVhat is Religion in general.*

Nation ſoever touch chiefly theſe Points.

Uncle. Your remark is good, and if you look into your definition, you ſhall find the cauſes of Religion. You ſay, Religion is a conceit of the Governours of mans life in Gifts and Puniſhments, whoſe cauſes we do not know. Then you ſee Religion muſt needs be a *faith*, for when we do not know things, we cannot make any conceit of them, but by believing and truſting others, whom we think know the things that we know not, and therefore Religion in general is taken upon truſt. Farther you ſay, that Religion is a method of pleaſing thoſe Governours, whereby to get goods, and avoid evils; ſo that the deſire of goods, and the fear of evils, are the authours and cauſes of Religion, we have then *hopes* and *fears* for the *will*, *ignorance*, and a *conceit of another mans knowledg* for the *underſtanding*, which be the Parents of Religion. Now think you, Colin, Can theſe Cauſes be defective and failing in any Age?

VVhich be the cauſes of Religion, and why it cannot periſh.

Nephew. Surely they cannot. For it were no generation of men, but beaſts, that were ſo doltiſh and ſottiſh, as to ſee ſo many *goods* and *harms*, which happen to all men we know not whence, and think that there were no cauſe thereof; and therefore it is the moſt eaſie, and moſt natural conceit that man can have, to conceive ſomething to be the cauſe of theſe goods and hurts. Now mans converſation being chiefly with one another, men naturally apprehend all things to be done by ſome *underſtanding thing*, as they ſee their own actions are. So that if there were a company of men ſprung out of the earth, like *Cadmus* his People, or raiſed out of Emits, like the *Myrmidons*, yet would they (if they were truly men) within a little while frame themſelves ſome Religion, according as by chance, or ſome ones apprehenſion or fancy, they ſhould conceit their *goods* and *evils* to proceed from ſome viſible or inviſible thing. Wherefore I admire, that ſome Peo-

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ple adored the Sun, some the Stars, others some rare men, from whom they had received in their life-time great benefits, imagining that even after death they were powerfull and beneficial. And surely it is much more impossible, that a People, which once hath had some Religion, should quite forget it, and come to have none at all, for these causes will be ever knocking at their hearts, putting them in minde, and driving them into conceit of some God or Governour; if therefore the Effects of perpetual Causes must be everlasting, these Causes of Religion (to wit, *Effects, whose Causes are hidden, and the good and evil which come unto us by them*) being never wanting, 'tis impossible that Religion should ever cease.

Uncle. And think you not, Cosin, that these same Causes do as well move those, who are settled in a Faith or Religion, to continue without changing their once received belief, as well I say, as they keep them, from forgetting that Religion, which they are once possessed of?

Nephew. I confess it seems evident to me, that the change of Religions cannot come by pure negligence and sleepiness, no more than the loss of it, being these warning of Nature, which force us to Religion, does also continually call upon us to keep our once practiced faith and credulity, unless there be greater Causes to countermand it, which I do not see but may be easily found sometimes.

Uncle. Peradventure not so easily as you imagine, for an Errour is a perswasion of the minde, and nothing can work upon our understanding but it self, and our will; whosoever therefore will make such a perswasion, must work upon one of these two. The will you know is moved and wielded by hopes and fears, the understanding by Reason and Authority. Whence arise three ways by which such an opinion may creep into mens mindes. First, by bringing more reason for it than can be brought on the contrary side. Secondly, by the authority of some so

How Errour is bred in mans.

great, as that their verdicts are held beyond examining. And thirdly, by the power of some, whose hands are full of pains and pleasures, and who can thereby move the *will*, which being moved, can make the understanding believe what she desires. Do you know any other means?

Nephew. Not I, Uncle, for I see that if I should bring any other, you would reduce it to some of these three. But me thinks such an opinion might steal upon the Church at unawares, some obscure man broaching it at the first, and others accepting of it by a kinde of negligence and indifferency to any opinion, or by too much credulity, not distinguishing right from wrong, though I see this touches somewhat upon Authority, and so will be reduced to that member of our division.

Uncle. It imports not to what member it be reduced, so there be no fourth way. But I thought you had learned sufficiently already to exclude this, for what makes more notice to be taken of any thing, than that, which changeth some publick and universal practice? Look but if any one go through the streets in some strange and new fashioned Apparel, how all stare and gaze upon him, the very Boys leave their Play to follow him, and look on him. And therefore to say, Such an Innovation can be brought in without being taken notice of, is as much as to say, The cause of admiration or taking notice can be set before our eys without working its Effect. Which is to say, that Fire and Towe should lie together without burning, or a stone hang at liberty in the air without falling down; these be impossibilities in Nature, and are in the ranck of those things against which Nature solicits by her continual causes of hopes and fears, which made you confess but now, that negligence was not a sufficient cause to produce the change of Religion. Wherefore let us see, if by any of these three ways, which I have proposed, the change of Religion can happen.

Nephew. Nay, Sir, I will do you the favour to ex-

exclude one of them, to wit, the way of perſwaſion, or by alleadging more reaſon againſt the true Religion, than can be brought for it, for ſeeing truths bear witneſs to one another, and that the Religion (we ſpeak of) is ſuppoſed to be true, 'tis impoſſible that more reaſon ſhould be brought againſt it, than for it; nor is the greatneſs of any mans wit (who ſhould ſtand to maintain the Errour) to be feared; for this Errour being to paſs through a great part of the world, 'tis not credible that one man ſhould ſo far ſurpaſs in wit the reſt of the world, as to put them all from their ſtanding without contradiction; or that in ſo much time as is neceſſary for the ſpreading of ſuch an Errour into the main of the Church, no man ſhould have wit enough, if not to bring more potent Arguments for the truth, at leaſt to finde out the weakneſs and fallacy of thoſe, which are brought againſt it, which would be ſufficient to hinder the progreſs of ſuch an Errour; for he, who is in poſſeſſion of an opinion, muſt have an inſolvable Reaſon to put him out of it, if he be wiſe and conſtant, much more thoſe who ground their *Tenets* upon receiving them from their forefathers, and hold all Reaſon inſufficient to prove their faith, becauſe of its ſupernaturality, and therefore ought more to hearken to what was delivered, than to any reaſon, which may ſeem to urge the change of what is known to be delivered. Thus much I confeſs is clear, but why the authority of ſome one, or more, whoſe words are above examine, or the power of ſome, who hold the ballance of good and bad, of pains and pleaſures, may not work an Errour into the Church, that I do not underſtand.

Uncle. You have drawn the queſtion from an univerſal to a particular, for we ſpoke of a change betwixt two Religions in common, and you ſpeak of a change from a true one to a falſe one. Yet this being ſufficient for our intent, I will add, that if you had that conceit of the true Religion, which much thought hath bred in me, to wit, that 'tis the moſt high, wiſe, rational, conformable to

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mans Nature, to Government, to all things fitting for mans life, that can be imagined, of all disciplines and learnings possible, that it leads into greater secrets of Nature than otherwise we should ever reach unto, and exceeds all the knowledg which made ancient and modern Sages so proud; if you had, I say, this conceit of the true Religion, you would be much more confirmed and strengthened in this perswasion. But why do you not think it impossible that the authority of one man should over-sway all the wits of the world? Surely the Devil himself would rather help the Church than permit so little pride amongst men; never yet any great man wanted his Antagoniſt, and had he such a flaw in his credit, as this our subject would give him, it would quickly hinder the extent of his authority. Not any one of our, never so much esteemed Fathers, is received in all things; nor is any of their authorities received in such an eminent height, as is necessary for the Effect we speak of. Who was greater than *Origen?* And yet was he condemned even when he was in greatest vogue. But I need not appeal to Example, where Nature by its own force strikes the stroke. For either this new Doctrine is brought in openly by the strong and earnest Endeavours of the Author himself (whose Authority must sway the world) and of his followers, and then by this very negotiation it will discover its newness; and being false, the more it is handled, the more it will shew its weakness, and at length go out like a snuff of it self: or else it comes in neglectedly, being written by the *by*, and the Innovatours authority urged by others upon occasion; and then the very manner bears with it so little likelihood and small efficacy, as that it would be every where checked by reason of its newness, and therefore could never pass uncontrouled through any great extent. And if we put the case, as before, to be in the Catholick Church, where the truth is not to be handled by learned Reasons, as being above Nature, but by what our forefathers have raught us, you see this great mans authority presently va-

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nisheth into smoak, since there's no place for any mans authority, where the constant and universal verdict of the present world is against it, in respect whereof he is but a single man. Concerning force or power you must suppose, before you can make any apparent Argument of it. First, that this power is over the whole Christian World. Secondly, to be so strong, that it fears not to give distast to the People. Thirdly, to be vehemently desirous to quell the old faith, and bring in a new one. Fourthly, that it hath zealous Ministers for the same end. And lastly, that all these continue untill all the ancient faith be extinct. And when all is done, yet will it remain upon Record, and be known, when this new opinion began, and the violence being ended, there's a Root in mens hearts to reject this new opinion, and return to the old, supposing, as we do, there's more Reason for the old, than for the new. So that in common sense, and Natures Principles, the Pope had just cause to write to the Emperour in these terms;

Niteris incassum navem submergere Petri,
Fluctuat, at nunquam mergitur illa ratis.

But to conclude this Point, Tell me, Cosin, what time think you is necessary for the introducing of an Errour by little and little, before it will pass for a thing delivered by hand to hand from *Christ?* For such an opinion we call a *Tradition.*

Nephew. I see it must gain this Reputation you speak of by making it quite forgotten, that the opinion was ever, either generally held, or practiced. For as long as 'tis known that the other opinion was ancienter, they strive in vain, who seek to establish the belief of this Position, to wit, *that this was delivered by the Apostles, and so descended from hand to hand.* Wherefore as long as it can be known that the contrary was in vogue, so long at least, and somewhat more must needs be the new opinion in broaching and prevailing; and if I remember, we agreed that for four or six hundred years the generally practiced *Tenet* of a precedent Church might be certainly known. And therefore I see that at least so much time is necessary, and as

much more as is requisite to extinguish by little and little the former practice and belief; and yet will there still remain Writings of that time, in which such a Point was in dispute, which will testifie, at least in favour of the prevailing side, that such a Controversie hath been, and that the fallen side was ancienter, and consequently there will still be evidence, that there was another Faith or Doctrine delivered by the Apostles before this came up, which indeed ought to be imbraced.

Uncle. Then, Colm, let us put two hundred years to be sufficient for such an Extinction, (which in so great a circuit, and for a thing rooted in mens hearts, and practiced in their actions, is but a small time) and joyn them to the four or six hundred we speak of, and consider, whether any violent mutation can continue against Nature for six or eight hundred years, be it either of Tyranny, Authority, or what other occasion soever, and this to oppress the true faith grounded in Nature. Might we not as well say, there would be perpetual fair weather for many years together through a great part of the world, as that there should be a perpetual disposition against Reason, and our natural inclination to the utter ruine and overthrow of our every-where received faith.

Nephew. You have reason, Uncle; for although when I consider the mutability of mankinde alone, and contrive with my self how this might be effected, it seems plausible to say, that another opinion might come in, and destroy a received *Tenet*, yet when I deeply weigh what you say against it, and ballance the one with the other, I see my frame is limited within a small compass and few years, but reacheth not to the universality and general Dominion, or Government of Nature. For I could make the like Argument for not raining, blowing, shining, and the like, that is, indeed, for the destruction of Nature. And I do not think you intend to make the Church stronger than the Pillars of Nature, on which it stands.

ſtands. We ought not therefore to eſteem Nature univerſally defectible, becauſe we cannot reach to ſee fully how every particular incumbrance is avoided, for 'tis not that in either of theſe ſubjects the Cauſes are not certain and infallible, but that my diſcourſe comprehends them not.

Uncle. I do not indeed intend to make the ſtrength of faith greater than the ſtrength of Nature, though perhaps I could, ſuppoſing, (which is certain) that Nature was built for the ſupernatural gifts and good, which God beſtows upon it, they, which being greater and better than Nature, 'tis fitting ſhould have ſtronger maintenance and holds than Nature it ſelf; and therefore 'tis likely that Nature is ſtrengthened by Principles and Foundations above its Pitch, to the end it may be a fit and ſure prop of faith and ſupernatural gifts. But this Point concerns not our preſent diſcourſe. *Why Faith is ſtronger than Nature.*

Nephew. I confeſs I now clearly ſee that the Chriſtian Church hath conſerved it ſelf from Errour, ſuppoſing that the Paſtours and Governours of it have carefully taken notice from time to time of their forefathers Doctrine, and I am oblig'd to you for this Leſſon. But may not the Church have been neglected herein? Though I ſcarcely have courage enough to ask you this queſtion; for I ſee you will anſwer me, that Nature muſt needs have its recourſe, and that howſoever at ſome times and places it may have defects, yet muſt it of neceſſity at other times, and in other places, have its returns, and freſhly renew its care, and be ſolicitous of ſo great a good, which cannot but fall out once within five or ſix hundred years, that is, within the term prefixed, wherein ſhe may diſcover the Doctrine of her forefathers, conſtantly held, and generally delivered, to be the Doctrine of *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. Nevertheleſs if you could ſhew me that the Church had in effect ſo conſerved it ſelf, I ſhould be more able to convince a perverſe opponent, and demonſtrate,

§. 8. That the truth of Christian Doctrine hath actually continued in the Church.

Uncle. IS it possible you should be so unreasonable, as to require me to prove a thing, which depends of mans will? yet that you may see how great the works of Almighty God are, and how nothing is so variable, but that he can fix and make it constant, I will endeavour to let you understand as much as my self in this Point, so you will be attentive, and raise a little your understanding to answer me in the way of rigorous discourse, which you have some experience in, by the Mathematicks you have tasted. Tell me then, do you think, if any great Congregation of men now living hold this Maxime for their Faith and Religion, *that nothing* is to be held for certain, and as a revealed truth, but what they have received from their forefathers, as a thing delivered by hand to hand from the Apostles, and that whatsoever is not so received, is not immutable, but may be altered if Reason command, do you think, I say, that this Congregation could in this our Age have begun to hold this Maxime? or that as they received the rest of their Doctrine from their forefathers, they must not also have received this *Tenet?*

Nephew. Truly I cannot tell you, for me thinks it were absurd to receive all the rest from their forefathers, and take this of new, which is the Rule of all the rest; yet I see it not so clearly, as that I am able to convince that 'tis so.

Uncle. Why, Colin, let us put the case, that there were a General Council of all Christendom sitting in the year 1600. And after much disputation about finding a Rule to settle matters of Religion, they should agree, that to receive nothing but what had been delivered unto them by hand to hand from *Christ* and his Apostles, were the best way to end all Disputations of Religion, and thereupon decree, that hereafter nothing should be held for certain and immutable, but what

what were ſo received; and that amongſt theſe Biſhops, one ſhould riſe up and make this difficulty, we cannot know that any thing is received by hand to hand from *Chriſt*, unleſs our forefathers, who lived in the laſt Age 1500. have delivered it unto us as ſuch, which they cannot have delivered unto us but by one of theſe two ways, either becauſe we know they had this ſame Principle, which we ſeek here to ſettle, (to wit, that they took nothing for immutably certain, and of faith, but what was ſo delivered unto them) and then we know, whatſoever they have delivered unto us for a matter of faith, was likewiſe received by them, or at leaſt they thought it to be received in the ſame manner, and therefore we may be confident of it; or elſe they muſt have declared unto us what is ſo received, what not, that the one part may be accepted by us, and eſtabliſhed as matters of faith, the other held in leſs eſteem, and as no Points of Faith. This ſecond we know hath not been done; and therefore if our forefathers had not this Principle, how ſhould we have it? For if they had it not, and have delivered our Doctrine and Religion unto us without diſtinction, we muſt of neceſſity accept much for Religion, Faith, and as received from *Chriſt*, which we know not whether it was ſo or no; and therefore we muſt either wilfully deceive our ſelves and our Succeſſours, accounting and eſteeming things, which were never received from *Chriſt*, to have been received from him, and ſo falſly deliver them for ſuch to our ſucceſſours, and conſequently ground both our faith and theirs upon this untruth, that our *Tenets* were received from *Chriſt*: or elſe we muſt content our ſelves as our forefathers have done, and ſettle no new ground of ending Controverſies in Religion. If one, I ſay, ſhould make this difficulty in that grave Aſſembly, Would it not puzzle them all, and put them off from their Reſolution?

Nephew. Truly, Uncle, it could not chuſe, unleſs they were obſtinately reſolved to damn themſelves and all their Poſterity, and that impudently

in the ſight of the whole world, which would reproach them with ſo notorious an impoſture. Nor can I imagine how ſuch a Poſition, though once begun, ſhould take root, the whole world being able to ſee and deteſt the indignity of it. And becauſe I foreſee your drift, I will grant, you may frame the ſame Argument for any Age, and conſequently there is no Age, in which this Reſolution could have been firſt taken up, but onely *in ſuch an one*, in which it was clearly known, what the Apoſtles taught, and what they did not, by witneſs from them, who had their Doctrine from their own mouths, that is, the very next Age after the Apoſtles. So that we may evidently conclude, that a Church, which now holds with univerſal conſent this Principle, which you ſpeak of, muſt of neceſſity have held the ſame from the next Age after the Apoſtles.

Uncle. But can you now tell me, Coſin, whether this Congregation, as long as it adheres to this Principle, can receive any thing of this nature and quality, contrary to what their forefathers delivered unto them upon this ſame Principle? And note, I pray, I do not ask whether they can receive any thing, but what they apprehend to be ſo; but I ask whether they can receive any thing as ſuch, but that which truly is ſo delivered, that is, whether they can be cozened in this queſtion, *Whether their forefathers delivered it ſo unto them or no.*

Nephew. 'Tis evident they cannot. For although one man may be deceived in what is told him, ſpecially at one time, yet to ſay, whole Nations are deceived in what is told them, not once or twice, but what they are bred and beaten to, is as much as to ſay, all men are deceived in judging white from black, becauſe, forſooth, ſome weak Eys are now and then miſtaken; or as to ſay, no body can walk, becauſe ſome have the Palſey, which were indeed to deſtroy Nature, and its conſtancy in univerſals, becauſe of its defectibility in its particulars, which is againſt common ſenſe and reaſon.

Uncle.

Uncle. Well then, do you think their immediate forefathers could teach them any thing as of this quality, but what themſelves believed, and had received in the ſame manner?

Nephew. No ſurely, their immediate forefathers could not deliver any thing as of this nature to their Succeſſours againſt the Doctrine, which they had received from their Predeceſſours, ever ſtanding in this Principle, that nothing is to be believed as of neceſſity in this degree, but what came by hand to hand from *Chriſt*, or his Apoſtles.

Uncle. Tell me then, I pray, whether in the two laſt Points, that is, whether either we can be deceived in what was delivered by our immediate forefathers unto us, as of this kinde; or they deliver us any Doctrine as of this quality, but what themſelves received in the like ſort, whether (I ſay) in either of theſe two Points there be any difference betwixt any former Age and this our preſent Age, or that what you have granted of this Age, muſt not neceſſarily hold in all other Ages ſince *Chriſt*?

Nephew. I confeſs I ſee no difference.

Uncle. Reflect then upon what you have granted, and conſider, whether any Errour, againſt a received Doctrine and practice of this nature, could ſo creep in, as that there ſhould be no determinate Age of its beginning, in which it firſt took Root, and flouriſhed?

Nephew. 'Tis not poſſible that any thing ſhould begin, and yet begin in no time. For I conceive, that an Age is no ſmall time, and gives no little growth to any thing that begins, ſo that to ſay, any Point of Doctrine is a whole Age in growing, and to ſay withall, it is interceptible, and after a whole Age inſenſible, is without doubt ſenſleſs. Yet if any ſhould ſay, that an Errour had been begun by a private man, and taught to ſome in our Age, which being neglected, grew into practice in ſome one Countrey, and from thence by the like neglect grew likewiſe to be cuſtomary in the next adjoyning, and ſo ſpread it ſelf, untill it had poſ-

ſeſſed the heart of *Chriſtendom*, and this for many years, ſo that now all memory, that ever the contrary had been in credit and practice, were loſt; if, I ſay, one ſhould tell me this, I doubt whether I ſhould be able to give him a convincing anſwer, and demonſtrative ſatisfaction.

Uncle. Coſin, this queſtion trencheth upon what we have already talked of, therefore I will give you ſuch a hint as your ſelf may work upon. Firſt, it is as manifeſt an impoſſibility, that a change of Religion ſhould be introduced inſenſibly into any one Countrey, as that a Burning Feaver ſhould for as long time conſume the whole without being taken notice of, or ſought to be prevented, ſince (as we ſaid) Nature permits us not generally to be ſleepy in Religion. Secondly, to ſay, it ſhall paſs imperceptible from Countrey to Countrey, and ſo get poſſeſſion of the whole *Chriſtian* world, is far more impoſſible, mens natures and diſpoſitions being ſo divers, that if they were put to wear Caps or Shooes alike, it could not be effected but by ſome publick force or command. Thirdly, that this ſhould be for ſo long a term, that the contrary practice ſhould be quite forgotten to have been formerly in uſe and requeſt, is yet beyond both. So that whoſoever is troubled with this doubt, doth not rightly underſtand the the nature of *Chriſtian* Religion, which is a truth of the quality of ſcience hanging all together, whereunto a truth may be added and yet remain whole, but if any falſity or croſs Poſition be admitted, it will not onely deſtroy the Poſition immediately oppoſite, but alſo whatſoever depends of it, that is, all indeed but chiefly Tradition. And ſo we ſee by experience, that none ever moved any Point of Faith, but if their Revolt dured long, they proceeded ſo far, as to take away *Tradition*, the Rule of all we are to believe. But can you tell me, Have we reached to the Reſolution of your Demand, and are you fully ſatisfied?

Nephew. This you have concluded, that if our Church rely upon Tradition now, it ever did ſo; and

and if it ever did rely upon Tradition, it must needs have maintained the same Doctrine from *Christ's* time to ours; for neither could any former Age deliver any thing contrary to what they had received upon this Principle, nor we mistake what they delivered; so that nothing contrary to the first received Doctrine can be admitted. This yet, me thinks, is wanting, to shew that the *Roman* Church relies upon Tradition, which I confess, to me is evident, at least that whatsoever we have received from our forefather, as coming by hand to hand from *Christ*, that we reverence and receive all such Points, as being necessary to be believed. Onely I have one scruple, wherein I must crave your help, and it is, whether this *Rule* of *Tradition* (which you say, is so constantly held to be the *Rule* of *Faith*) be so admitted of by all Catholicks or no; for I fear the variety of contrary opinions, which I hear are amongst our learned men, will prejudice your Arguments. Wherefore I could wish you would shew me,

§. 9. *That the dissention of the Catholick Doctours concerning the* Rule *of Faith doth not hurt the certainty of* Tradition.

FOr I am told (how true I know not) that some of our Divines maintain, that in the Person of the Pope resides the Rule of Faith, by a singular gift and privileg bestowed upon S. *Peter* and his Successours; and this so rigorously, that no General Council, no not although the Pope's Legats be present and confirm it, is of force to oblige *as of faith*, untill the personal confirmation of his Holiness be obtained. Others, they say, esteem the Council above the Pope, and so do not hold the Pope's approbation of a Council to be necessary, but that this Rule of Faith resides in the Council. Others I hear, to make all safe, joyn both in one, and neither admit the Council without the Pope, nor the Pope without

the Council to breed any obligation of Faith. And farther I hear, that amongſt theſe Divines, of what opinion ſoever they be, touching the ſubject, in which this *Rule* or *higheſt Authority* doth reſide, there be ſome which think, that not any *new* Doctrine or Poſition can be broached or propoſed as certain, and as an Article of Faith by what Authority ſoever, unleſs that Doctrine was eſteemed certain before, and ever believed as ſuch. Yet I am told there be many who maintain and avouch, that *this higheſt Authority* of the Church (whereſoever it be) may and can define Points of Doctrine not certainly known hitherto, nor ever expreſly believed before. Which how they may be reconciled amongſt themſelves, or ſtand with this, *that Tradition is our Rule of Faith*, I confeſs I know not.

Uncle. Truly, Coſin, your Objection is ſtrong, yet I hope to content you. For the firſt part of it, I ſee no great matter in the variety of opinions amongſt our Divines, for you ſee they ſeek out the *Decider* of Points of Doctrine, that is, by whoſe mouth we are to know, (upon occaſions of diſpute) what and which be our Points and Articles of our Faith, to wit, whether the Pope, or the Council, or both. Which is not much material to our purpoſe, whatever the truth be, ſuppoſing we acknowledg no Articles of Faith, but ſuch as have deſcended unto us by Tradition from *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles. The ſecond part of your Objection ſeems to be of greater force, becauſe ſome Divines ſeem to acknowledg an Authority in the Church, which hath power, not onely to determine either ſpeculative or practical Points of Doctrine, new or old, in ſuch manner as that the whole Church is obliged to accept, or not oppoſe its definition, (which every Catholick grants, and the Reaſons I told you in our firſt conference do evidently convince) but alſo that this Authority can ſo determine even a ſpeculative Point of Doctrine, which hitherto was ever uncertain, nor ever acknowledged as revealed, or eſteemed as an Article of Faith, that hereafter the whole Church

ſhall

shall be obliged to receive, acknowledg, and believe it as a revealed and necessary Point of *Christian* Doctrine, and as an Article of Faith. Which opinion you must know, is but an opinion, nor do the Authours of it oblige any man to believe it as certain, nor do they condemn those who neither do, nor ever will acknowledg any such Position, and therefore this ought not to trouble you. Nay, contrariwise all Divines will generally tell you, that no *new* Articles of Faith can be made, that there's now no Revelations for new Points of Doctrine, and that *Christ Jesus* was our onely Law-maker in this kinde, having suggested to his Apostles all that is necessary of this nature and quality, and the Apostles likewise taught their Churches all that was necessary to be known of this degree. Wherefore you see all agree upon *Tradition*, nor any one either denies it, or doubts of it; whereas it appears by the diversity of their opinions, that they do not universally and generally agree in any other means or Rule of Faith, though some admit of another in way of opinion. Yet to give you farther satisfaction in this business, I will teach you a Point of Philosophy, which perhaps you never fully understood. I am sure you will not deny but 'tis a different question to ask, how an Herb or Tree grows, and to ask how *Aristotle* or *Theophrastus* says it grows; for in the same growing there can be no variety, but in their opinions there may. So in man, 'tis a different thing, what he doth or is done in him, and what he thinks he doth, or is done in him, as in sickness, digestion, and other natural works 'tis evident, yea, and in voluntary actions too, which depend of corporal instruments, as to go, run, turn our Eys, speak, cough, spit, or the like, which we do freely and voluntarily, yet were we examined by what instruments and motions we do them, peradventure who seems to know most, would be found short, at least amongst many there would be divers opinions. But do you think the same happens in our thoughts and judgments, which be purely spiritual?

Nephew.

Nephew. I cannot tell, yet me thinks, the soul should be so well acquainted with her own actions, as that she should not need any help to know them. And all men agree, that onely men upon earth can see his own minde; and therefore if it be not clear to man, what himself thinks, nothing is clear.

Uncle. You are deceived, Cosin, for as long as we are in this world, we cannot know any thing of our own thoughts and affections, but as we reflect upon the corporal motions, which accompany them, and which because none feel but our selves, none can know but our selves, though sometimes it happens quite contrary, when these motions break forth into outward apparence; for then others descry our mindes, and we our selves through the violence of passion, are not so well able to judg of them as others who see us. But to speak of men free from passion, and who use to reflect much upon their own thoughts, even in them their internal actions proceed from a Principle directed by a superiour Guide than their own Reason, as appears by this, that they know nothing of their own thoughts but by reflection, and the reflection is a distinct act from the former, upon which the reflection is made, so that neither the reflection it self is always made by voluntary design, nor any act which is made without reflection. Besides consider, I pray, how few know by what virtue their understandings are made certain of those Principles and Positions which they cannot doubt of, or by what virtue they adhere so strongly to the conclusion of a syllogisme, not one of a thousand who do these things every day. Wherefore 'tis evident, that even in our spiritual actions, not all that we do is done by our proper understanding, that is, with knowing reflection and design; and therefore, the same man may even in these intellectual acts do one thing, and think he doth another; and divers men may agree in what they do, and yet disagree in their opinions of what it is they do. And now to close with your difficulty, seeing faith is a perswasion, or an agree-

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ing in ſome reaſon of Authority; all the Doctours of the Catholick Church may agree in believing, that is, in acting and practiſing their faith in the ſame manner, and yet be divided in their ſpeculations, by which they ſeek to determine what it is they do, and it is their doing which makes them Chriſtians, and not their ſayings, for they live and believe as Chriſtians, but ſpeak and deliver their opinions as Doctours, which be qualities far different from being a Chriſtian. And do you not ſee that theſe Doctours believe after their ſpeculations, and framing of their opinions, as they did before they thought of, or ſtudied this difficulty?

Nephew. I do not doubt but they do, for the faith of all Chriſtians muſt needs be the ſame, and conſequently all muſt go upon the ſame motive, though one may underſtand better, and apprehend deeper that motive than another doth.

Uncle. You ſay well. Conſider then, that when theſe Doctours were young men, and had not yet ſtudied Divinity, and you ſhall finde that they had no other motive of their belief, but the Authority of the preſent Church, and therefore howſoever they diſcourſe learnedly in their Books, the concluſion muſt be in their Lives, to reſt upon the Authority of the preſent Church, as before they did.

Nephew. Nay, if you go that way to work, I fear, you will fall ſhort of your intent: for the Childe believes Father and Mother, the Pariſhioner his Paſtour, without reflection of the preſent Church. 'Tis like therefore theſe Divines rely upon the motives which they maintain, whatſoever they did when they were young.

Uncle. Not ſo neither: for as the water of the *New River*, which is brought to *London* comes to a particular Houſe by a ſmall Pipe, yet 'tis continuate to the whole body of the *River*: ſo the inſtruction of faith, though it come to a Childe by his Parents, and to a Pariſhioner by his Paſtour, yet the dependence of the Doctrine is from the whole Church, whoſe Members and Inſtru-

ments the Parents and Paſtours are, if they be in the Church, to which you know I told you what is required. And 'tis the like, when Parents teach their Children, what is to be done, or avoided, according to the Laws of the Countrey; for though the Father ſpeak, yet 'tis the Common-wealth which prevails and bindes.

Nephew. At leaſt, me thinks, Uncle, ſuch great Doctours ſhould not be ignorant of a Point agreed upon by the whole Church; and therefore ſince they diſagree about the motive of faith, I do not ſee how you can ſay, 'tis generally agreed on in the Catholick Church.

Uncle. Had this agreement been made in a General Council, or in ſome univerſal meeting of faithfull Chriſtians, and ſo recorded, I doubt not but theſe learned Clerks would have known it; but it was not ſo agreed on. Yet as by the univerſal bleſſing of *Creſcite & multiplicamini*, all men and beaſts agreed upon feeding and filling the world, every one in his kinde, by the direction of their Maker, knocking at their ſtomacks when they were hungry, and at their fancy when they were full, to ſet on work thoſe Inſtruments, by which theſe Commands of Almighty God were to be fulfilled: even ſo by the like bleſſing of *Euntes in mundum univerſum, prædicate omni creaturæ*, the Apoſtles being diſperſed into all Nations, by the virtue of doing Miracles, found credulity, or rather forced faith out of the flinty hearts of the corrupted world, and having ſettled *Chriſt's* Doctrine, dying, left this Agreement in their Succeſſours ſouls and mindes; to believe what was delivered from them, and to truſt them who had heard them ſpeak, and afterwards to truſt thoſe who had heard it from them who had their inſtruction from the Apoſtles: and laſtly, to truſt the publick conſent which affirmed, that they had their faith by Entail from them, though many Ages after. This Agreement being written in hearts, and not in books, 'tis eaſie for learned men, who ſeek their learning in books, and not in hearts, *Gen.* 1. *Marc.* 16.

hearts, to mistake. As in Philosophy, whilest great Clerks seek Nature not in it self, but in other mens sayings, they are divided, and few in the right, the truth being but one.

Nephew. You have been as good as your word. For I see it imports not that our Divines be of different opinions in this Point, so that in their lives and practice they agree. And truly I never heard of any *Catholick* that either doubted, but that Christian Doctrine was descended by Tradition, or thought, that what was so descended, could be false, nay, I think every moderate and wise *Protestant* will make no question of that which he conceives to have descended from the Apostles by succession. For *Catholicks*, we all rely upon the Censure of the present Church, nor can or dare any man appeal from it, and call himself a Catholick, for we account them Infidels and Publicans, who are retractory to this *Tenet*. Wherefore 'tis evident, that whatsoever the Church speaks and delivers for Tradition, is agreed upon by all Catholicks to be certain and unrefusable, and since all other motives and Rules of faith are not universally received, 'tis evident likewise, that this is the Rule which can oblige us to certainty in matters of belief. But I have another great difficulty, to wit, that I see our Catechists and Preachers, when they teach us Christian Doctrine, tell us, this you are to believe, this you are to practice, without expressing the differences which are betwixt the Points of Doctrine, whereof perhaps some are but onely the answers of learned men, some, definitions of the Church, and some, matters of Tradition; and the like I believe of former Ages, Christian Doctrine descending unto us in a heap of confusion, and therefore 'tis hard to distinguish what is of Tradition, what the general consent of the Church, and what onely learned mens opinions. Why then may not some Position of this last rank pass for a Tradition by the adoption of some Ages, in which it will be forgotten that ever it had its beginning from the wit and industry of private

men? And to satisfie me in this Point you must let me see how, that

§. 10. *That teaching of Christian Doctrine without determining what is of necessity to be believed, what not, hurts not the progress of Tradition.*

Uncle. IF I should answer you, that former Ages have been more exact in distinguishing things certain from uncertain, it would not be without ground, as you may see by the framing of ancient *Creeds*, and other *Professions* of Faith, as occasions required, but this were to send you to Antiquity, whereas in this discourse you know we both desire that common sense and Reason without farther inquiry should be our Judg. Wherefore the Point you speak of, which you fear might deceive us by the likeness of Tradition, is either true or false, if true, then I pray, what inconvenience is there, if it surprise us in the quality of its certainty?

Nephew. This I fear and think, that it would break the Rule and certainty of *Tradition*, whereupon relies the whole building and frame of our faith, according to our discourse. For if once truth not delivered by Tradition may pass for *so* delivered, what security can we have that a falsity may not likewise pass in the same manner, and so bring an Errour amongst us?

Uncle. I put you onely that part of the question, *if the Point were true*, which you draw into the contrary, *if it were false*; wherefore if it do not follow that an untruth can deceive us in that kinde, then there is no inconvenience in the consequence of the former part, to wit, that truth may be taken as delivered by Tradition, which truly is not so delivered. And the Reason is clear, for seeing the truths of Religion are known, for the framing of our lives conformably unto them, it imports little, in respect of virtue, upon what Grounds, they are held in particular, so they be uni-

universally and constantly held, for an action done in consequence of such believed truths is never the worse for the quality of the certainty of its object. Yet for your farther satisfaction, this I will add, that howsoever the common people do not distinguish what is of Tradition, and what is but of some learned mens opinions, nevertheless those whom we call Divines (if truly they be such, as the name requires) may and do distinguish Positions of such different natures. For Christian Doctrine *is* not a bundle of loose Positions (as those who cnegligently look on it may think) but a true Discipline hanging together by consequences and order tending to one end. And of this Doctrine & Discipline some parts be such as cannot be known but by immediate revelation, others such as no sensible man can doubt of, if he believe the former. And learned men know, that of both these two, the one is expresly delivered by Tradition, the other is as firm as if it were so delivered. For as it was revealed that our Saviour is truly God and Man, so every man of common sense knows that he had two *wills*, *divine* and *humane*, against the *Monothelites*. Other Points there may be which need art and study, to deduce and fetch them out of the two former; and of these likewise a true Divine cannot be ignorant, since they are the fruits of learning and study, and consequently have ever been in the souls and writings of learned Matters. And these Points every one knows who is conversant in Logick, and in judging the qualities of such Propositions as belong to Science. And your self I am sure, by the little skill you have therein, and by the small light of this discourse, will easily judg that this is reasonable.

Nephew. I conceive your meaning, but whereas you say, that the Points of the second order are as firm as those which are delivered by *Tradition*, me thinks that's not reasonable, sithence *Tradition* relies wholly on God and his Word, but the other onely upon mans discourse, which is fallible, and easily mistaken, and therefore must of necessity be much inferiour.

Uncle. I would not have you take my words so precisely, nor in so rigorous a degree of comparison; for so even of Demonstration the Precedent will be esteemed more certain, than that which is deduced out of it, though in moral estimation the certainties be equal. And so it is in those two degrees, for truly that little discourse, which is required for the second degree, is infallible, certain, and evident, and therefore the knowledg proceeding from it, may well be ranked with the former degree. But I suppose you expect to hear why it doth not follow, that if a truth not delivered by Tradition may nevertheless pass for such; why, I say, an Errour may not have the same progress, and surprise the Church, that is,

§. 11. *Why no Errour can pass universally through the Church of God.*

AND this I will shew you in a word, because it falls in the repetition of what we have already discoursed on. The impossibilities are three. First, it trencheth upon the resolution we formerly made, that one mans Authority could not prevail against, and over the whole Church; for this is the difference betwixt a truth and a falshood, that a truth, though it begin fr6 one, yet may it be accepted of by all, by reason of its evidence, which when one hath laid open, others may follow, not for the mans Authority, but for the love of the seen truth; whereas falshood, which cannot bring evidence with it, must be bolstered up by the mans credit and reputation, which you know is insufficient. Secondly, it is impossible an Errour should generally prevail, by reason of the immutability which is in the universality of contingent causes, whose particulars may be defective, but the universals cannot. So that as it is impossible in Nature that all children should be born with one eye, all colts with three legs, or the like, so were it a monstrous accident, and that in a higher and more immutable nature, if an Errour should generally prevail, and pass through all man-

mankinde, or through ſo great a part of it as we make account the Catholick Church is, and will ever be. The third impoſſibility is, becauſe it troncheth upon the ſtability of Religion; for ſince we agreed that 'tis impoſſible for any Nation to have no Religion, and as impoſſible to change a true into a falſe; and likewiſe that Chriſtian Doctrine hath the nature of ſcience, ſo far as that no Errour can fall into it but muſt bring contradiction and oppoſition againſt the Principles and received practice of the Church, and ſo make a breach againſt the ancient poſſeſſion, it doth therefore plainly appear, that as it is impoſſible for ſuch a breach to become univerſal in time and place, ſo likewiſe muſt it needs be impoſſible that an untruth ſhould be univerſally received for *Tradition*, having not been delivered as ſuch.

Nephew. I muſt confeſs, your Reaſons ſeem good, yet might one ſay, All your Reaſons are but moral Perſwaſions, which may fail; as if one ſhould ſay, It is reaſonable to think an honeſt man will not lie, yet I doubt not but ſometimes the contrary happens. Wherefore I pray you tell me,

§. 12. *Of what quality you think theſe your Reaſons and Diſcourſes be, and whether you conceive them to bear an abſolute certainty.*

Uncle. I Fear it will be too far on the night before I can ſatisfie your difficulty, yet I will ſhew you briefly and familiarly what may ſuffice. Tell me then, Do you think there is ſuch a City as *Rome* or *Conſtantinople*?

Nephew. That I do, I would I knew what I ask as well.

Uncle. Who told you there were any ſuch Cities?

Nephew. Truly I do not remember who told me ſo in particular, but I have heard ſo many talk of them without doubting, that it were folly to make any queſtion of it.

Uncle. But if I or some other of whose honesty you doubt not, should tell you we have been there, and have seen those Cities with our own eys, Would you believe it more certainly than you do?

Nephew. No indeed, Uncle, for though I should, in that case, make no doubt of it, yet their Authorities, upon which I do already build my belief, are no less, nay, far greater, since if it were not so, many more of no less credit and reputation must be Liars, whom though I cannot name, yet Nature tells me, that if thousands had not reported it of their own knowledg, it could not pass so constantly and uncontroulably as it doth.

Uncle. But if a man should come with many great Reasons and motives to perswade you, that there neither is, nor ever was any such Cities as we speak of. Nay, let us suppose that if you lived but twenty miles from *London*, where every day you saw hundreds come from thence, and your self had never been there; and there should come unto you a man who should labour to shew by reason, that it were a folly to think there were any such City as *London*. Or to make our supposition more strong, suppose you had lived divers years in *London*, and had never seen *London-bridg*, which every day you might see if you would, and some man would perswade you there were no such thing, what would you do?

Nephew. I would give him hearing as I would to a fool or a mad man, and so much power should his fair Reasons prevail with me. For although I never had been at *London*, yet could I not chuse but know there were a *London* more certainly, than any learned discourse could make me know any other thing. For it is as impossible that so many men should conspire in a Lye concerning a thing, which might be so easily discovered, and that no body should contradict so many, who should dayly say, they had seen and felt it, as it is, that men should be no men; and far more possible for me to be deceived in a Reason never so evi-

dent,

dent, than ſo many to ſwarve ſo far from humane nature.

Uncle. Why then, if you think it madneſs in a man to doubt or not to believe ſuch a thing, what ſtrength do you conceive theſe our Arguments muſt have? Muſt you not needs think they have as much force upon the minde, as colour conveniently diſpoſed hath upon the eye? as the objects of ſmell and taſte have upon the noſtril and pallate? or indeed as a demonſtration hath upon the underſtanding? And in fine, if any admit not of theſe Arguments as good, Is it not evident that 'tis not for want of force in the object, but of diſpoſition in the perſon?

Nephew. I confeſs it ſeems to me ſo, yet I ſee not why it muſt be ſo, for there's ſo great difference betwixt natural things and moral, and the *will* of man is ſo much more mutable than Nature, that I cannot conceive how any certainty can be had in moral things.

Uncle. I ſee you ſeek to engage me into a long diſcourſe, but I will cut you ſhort. Do you think it is againſt Nature to tell a Lye, or that 'tis a natural action?

Nephew. I think 'tis a moral action, neither with nor againſt Nature, and I think the like of all Virtues and Vices, nor do I know why I ſhould think otherwiſe.

Uncle. You know we ſay that *children* and *fools* tell true, and that fools are called *Naturals*, as working by Nature. And have you not marked in your ſelf, that being asked a queſtion, if you be heedleſs you preſently anſwer the truth, but if you be upon your guard, you conſider, and reſolve how far to anſwer, and what to conceal. Nay, if you have marked it, you have never told a formal Lye but you have been forced to frame a new thing in your minde, which before was not in it; ſo that what Nature and the courſe of Learning and ſpeaking breeds would never lye. To lye therefore you muſt have art, and change ſome natural Poſition

How a Lye is framed againſt Nature.

of your fanſie to make or frame it, as if a man would turn his hand or face backwards; and ſo we ſay in *Latine*, *Mentiri eſt contra mentem ire*, which is to croſs that which is in our mindes, whereas words are by Nature made conformable to our underſtandings: whence 'tis manifeſt that a Lye is againſt Nature, and cannot be done but by a voluntary reſolution to change the courſe of Nature. For although a falſhood may be told naturally, if *that* which is falſe be in our minde, either by ſettled opinion, or by the ſurpriſe of inconſideration, yet a *Lye*, which is the putting by of that which is naturally in our minde, or at leaſt the hindering of it to manifeſt it ſelf, and the ſubordination of another thing to go out in its place, cannot chuſe but be voluntary, and done for ſome end or reſpect which we aim at. And the like may be ſaid to prove all Vices to be againſt Nature. For if Nature be the Principle of Action in us, and none who beareth the face of man from the boy that plays at Puſh pin, to the Biſhop that judgeth for Heaven, but profeſſeth to follow Reaſon, and exacts it of another, no doubt but Reaſon is the very Nature of man; wherefore if Vice be nothing elſe but the defect of our Action from the Rule of Reaſon, 'tis evident, that when we do any thing againſt Reaſon, we muſt needs work againſt the Nature of man, and conſequently Vice is againſt the Nature of man. And ſo we ſee that man is generally aſhamed of Vice, and what he is not aſhamed of, he will not repute to be Vice, but will defend it as reaſonable.

How all Vice is againſt Nature.

Nephew. Give me leave to interrupt you, Sir; for I fear I did not well declare my ſelf. It was not my minde to ſay that Reaſon is not the Nature of man, but that there is a great difference betwixt the Nature of man, which we call Reaſon, compared to his moral actions; and betwixt the nature of other things (as of the Elements) compared to their actions. And therefore although Philoſophers may ſhew perhaps impoſſibilities in Nature,

Nature, yet will it be hard to do the like in actions of *Reason*, or rather of the *will*, whose ways seem to be uncertain.

Uncle. No, Cosin, I did not mistake your intention, but I will make no difference betwixt the Nature of man and other things, but in excellency; and I conceive this excellency of mans Nature to consist in a greater constancy of working, and so think an impossibility as easily shewed in mans actions, as in the actions of any other Nature. For cannot we say of many things before they be done, that no wise man will do them, and therefore that who doth them is not wise. For example, Can you think that any wise man will take a Ball to cut withall? or a Pike-staff to fetch water in? Be not such things as these as easily known, as whether there be any place without a body, or stuffed with more than one? Wherefore we may be sure, that if a wise man go to fetch water, he will take some thing else than a Pike-staff to fetch it in; or if he be to cut, he will not take a Ball; so that 'tis manifest Reason hath as firm Principles as any other Nature; and that as the Nature of one thing will hold until a stronger contrary do cross it, so there must be in any particular man a contrary disposition stronger than Reason in him, to make him go against Reason. Now therefore if you can cast up the source of Reason, and of its contraries, you may certainly know what a man will do; which although perhaps you cannot exactly ballance in a particular man, yet in a great number and in whole multitudes you may in some things know it as certainly, as you can do any thing by a demonstration. For example, suppose there were an Assembly of grave and wise men, as our Parliament, or the like, which had had a very fair Sun-shine day to sit in, and one should tell you, that in the next Sessions following they would decree it had been a very foul day, and would command under pain of death every man to believe and profess so. Though I think you will

How Reason comes to fail in any man.

will say, it were impossible they should make any such Decree, yet would I know how you would go about to prove it. Would you not consider what force of fears or hopes were necessary to induce one of these men to tell such a notorious Lye, whereby he were to hazard his Conscience and Reputation for ever, and then increase and augment the difficulty by the multitude? And farther would you not urge that there were no such hopes or fears as were able to quell any one, or at least as were necessary to over-sway them all, considering that the same hopes or fears could not fall upon such variety of estates and humours as all these men were of; and knowing certainly any of these three, you would assuredly pronounce the supposed Assertion to be false. For, say you, *such* a force is necessary to break Reason in this Congregation, but *such* a force at this present cannot be had, and therefore Reason at this present cannot be broken in them. In which discourse a Mathematician will tell you, his demonstrations hang upon the very same Gimals. Wherefore as men cannot ordinarily demonstrate, that one body cannot be in two places, nor two in one, yet are we certain there is a natural demonstration for it, and we are by Nature assured of it. So no doubt, but there is a demonstration to him that lives in *London*, that there is a *London-bridge*, and he is naturally certain of it, though he cannot frame the demonstration by Articles and Syllogisms, as a true Philosopher can; for surely a Philosopher, if he will take pains, may finde a demonstration for both.

Nephew. I heartily thank you for this discourse, both for the present subject, wherein you have contented me beyond my expectation, as also, because me thinks I conceive by it, that there may be certain knowledg, not only in Mathematicks, but in all other Sciences, since there is so clear and efficacious means of proceeding even in moral matters, which seem the most mutable and uncertain of all, and where I thought scarcely any Reason was to be expected.

Uncle. O! Cosin, though he was a great man that

that ſaid, *Ars longa, vita brevis*, yet he muſt give me leave to be his Interpreter, for 'tis not the length of Art, but our not taking the right way, which makes it long; otherwiſe Art would be but a convenient ſolace to our Lives. Would you think that a private man following the Wars, without help of others Writings, by his own induſtry, ſhould ſurpaſs the greateſt Clerks that have pored double his time upon Books? And, *this*, our Age hath ſhewed in a *French* Gentleman, now living. *Monſieur des Cartes.*

Nephew. Me thinks, Uncle, it were a good work, and neceſſary for the *Chriſtian* World, if your ſelf or ſome other would take the pains to ſet down the Principles of our Faith in form of demonſtration. For that I conceive would take away all Controverſies, and make all *Chriſtians* of one Belief and Religion.

Uncle. You are a young man, and conceive not the daintineſs of the Palates of this Age, they would not taſte ſuch rugged and bitter ſtuff, nay, they cannot digeſt any thing which is not ſugered with queint and pleaſant diſcourſe. Who would reade ſuch a Work? Who would have the patience to ſtudy it? to comprehend it, and make it his own? This very diſcourſe, which hath paſſed betwixt you and me, is ſo thorny, and full of ſo many chained conſequences, that were it publick, few would carry it away. Let us therefore content our ſelves to make it known to our own acquaintance, to whom upon occaſion you may deliver it by the way of familiar diſcourſe, wherein peradventure it will ſavour better, and profit more.

Nephew. I pray leave me not thus, give me at leaſt ſome ſpecial light to anſwer ſuch Objections, as without doubt will be propoſed, when I ſhall deliver your diſcourſe to thoſe, who are better read than my ſelf. Wherefore leaſt I ſhould diſgrace your learned Leſſons, I pray, tell me how,

§. 13. Some chief and short Objections may be solved.

Uncle. I Cannot give you a better Rule than to ſtick to the Churches Authority for *Tradition*, and not be eaſily beaten off by great names and words; for if you conſider that a *Tradition*, or a Point of Faith delivered by Tradition, is a Point univerſally preached and delivered by the Apoſtles, and imprinted in the hearts of the *Chriſtian* World, and by an univerſal belief and practiſe continued unto our days; whereof our warrant is no other than that we finde the preſent Church in quiet poſſeſſion of it, and whereof no beginning is known; if this, I ſay, you conſider, and ſtick well to this apprehenſion, you need not fear any Objection which can be made againſt you: for you rely upon the teſtimony of the whole *Chriſtian* Church; you rely upon the force of Nature, born to continue from father to childe; you rely upon the promiſes of *Jeſus Chriſt*, of continuing his Church unto the end of the world, and upon the efficacy of the Holy Ghoſt, ſent to perform it, by whom *Chriſt's* Law was written in *Chriſtians* hearts, and ſo to be continued to the day of doom; ſo that you ſee no humane Authority, by which our Eſtates and Lives are governed; no Proofs of Courts or Law, which nevertheleſs are admitted as Judges of thoſe affairs, which too many (God knows) eſteem more weighty and important than Religion; no conſent of Hiſtory; and in fine, (if what we have ſaid be true) no demonſtration better, nor greater, nor peradventure equal. On the other ſide, you ſhall finde all Objections fall of their own weakneſs. As, ſome object, the *Millenary Errour* for a Tradition, whereof there is no certainty, nor conſent of thoſe who write of it, whether it have been publickly preached by the Apoſtles or no, and even thence it is excluded from the nature of ſuch Tradition as we rely upon. Others finding divers Fathers agreeing in one opi-

opinion, urge them presently *for*, or *against Tradition*; as if Fathers in their days were not private Doctours, and might not be mistaken in some Points, as well as the Doctours of the present Church: 'tis true, we reverence the Fathers in many Titles, above any living Doctours, yet every Catholick knows that divers Fathers have sometimes fallen into the same *Errour*. Wherefore you must note, Cosin, that the Fathers sometimes as witnesses of what the Church held in their days, and sometimes as Doctours, and so 'tis often hard to distinguish how they deliver their opinions, because sometimes they press Scripture or Reason as Doctours, and sometimes to confirm a known truth. So that who seeks Tradition in the Fathers, and to convince it by their testimony, takes a hard task upon him; if he go rigorously to work, and have a cunning Critick to his Adversary. Howsoever 'tis not a thing fitting for ordinary and unlearned people, but onely for such as have time at will, and great reading and understanding.

Nephew. You have many Adversaries in this opinion, for generally men seek Tradition out of the Fathers, and think they have found it, when in every Age they finde several Fathers of the same opinion.

Uncle. I intend not to detract from their Labours, who have taken pains in this kinde, for they are profitable and necessary for the Church of God, and excellent testimonies of *Tradition*, but I neither think it to be the body of *Tradition*, but onely an effect and consequent of it, nor that the multitude of *Christians*, whose faith is to be regulated by *Tradition*, need have recourse to those learned Works. Wherefore although divers Fathers in the same or different Ages be found to contradict some Point, whereof the present Church is in quiet and immemorable possession, their Authorities ought not to prevail; nor are they sufficient to prove there was not even in their days a contrary Tradition. For our faith being in some sort naturally grafted in the hearts of

Christians, learned men may now and then mistake some Points of it, as well as the Causes and Effects of their own nature it self, according as I told you but now. And as in other Points, so even in this, to wit, in the resolution of Faith, wherein as our Doctours seem to differ now adays, so might the Fathers also; and in particular S. *Cyprian* seems to think, that the resolution of Faith was to be made into *Scripture*, and not into *Tradition*, though indeed he opposed not *Scripture* to *Tradition*, but to *Custome*, which is a far different thing, the one relying upon the doctrine of the Apostles, the other upon the Authority of private Doctours; and supposing he was mistaken, it were no more than what we now see to consist with the unity of the Church. There is one Objection, and but onely one of moment, and 'tis that S. *Augustine* and *Innocentius* with their Councils, held that the *Communion of Children was necessary for their Salvation*, and their words seem to be apparent. But who looks into other passages of the same Authours, will finde that their words are metaphorical, and that their meaning is, that the Effect of Sacramental Communion, to wit, an incorporation into *Christ's* mystical Body, which is done by Baptisme, is of necessity for childrens salvation. I remember not at this present any other Objection of moment which may not be easily solved out of these Principles.

Nephew. I will suggest you one or two if you please, the one of Communion under both kindes, wherein our Adversaries say, we leave a known and practiced *Tradition* for many Ages. The other concerning the Books of Scripture, where they say, we accept of a new Scripture, or Rule of Faith without Tradition.

Uncle. I did think, Cosin, you would answer these your self. For the first, there is two parts of it, the one, that the blessed Sacrament was given under both kindes ordinarily, the other, that sometimes it was given in one kinde onely. And Catholicks being in possession of both parts by Tradition, those that will prove that Catholicks go against

againſt Tradition muſt prove that it was never adminiſtred under one kinde onely, which our Adverſaries neither go about, nor can perform, but play onely that part which is granted them, to wit, that ordinarily it was adminiſtred under both kindes. For the ſecond, 'tis not ſufficient to ſhew that ſome have doubted of this or that part of the Canon, unleſs they can prove that thoſe, who did not doubt, were not a ſufficient party to make a *Tradition* from the Apoſtles time. And ſo you ſee it fals into the queſtion we mentioned before, that ſome Fathers or Doctours being of a contrary minde break not the force of Tradition.

Nephew. I am loath to leave you, Uncle, becauſe me thinks I am not ſufficiently armed to anſwer all Objections: and yet whatſoever I call to minde, falls into ſome of theſe conditions you require.

Uncle. Let me ſee how skilfull you are, I will try how you can anſwer me to

§. 14. The *Examples of Tradition which ſeem to have failed.*

FIrſt therefore, betwixt *Adam's* being caſt out of *Paradiſe* and the *Deluge* there are accounted about two thouſand years, which according to the long lives men enjoyed at that time, made not fully three Deſcents, and yet in *Noah's* time the forgetting of Gods Law was ſo great that a general Floud was neceſſary for the cleanſing of the World. *Sem* was *Noah's* ſon, and before his death both the Diviſions of Nations happened, becauſe of their pride againſt God, and (as moſt Hiſtorians think) the ſelecting of *Abraham's* family into Gods ſervice, the reſt of the world having abandoned it. Likewiſe, what is become of all antient Religions, the moſt of them delivered by Tradition, they are all gone and rooted out. So that plain experience is againſt thoſe fine diſcourſes you approved ſo highly, What anſwer would you make to this?

Nephew. I would deny it to be true, I mean I

would say, that Gods Law was not forgotten, but neglected before the Floud; and the like at the building of *Babel*; and for *Abraham's* time, we know that *Abimelech*, & *Pharaoh*, and *Melchisedech*, and others, (as *Job* whensoever he lived) observed Gods Law. As for Heathen Religions they were written in Books, for any thing I know, and therefore prejudice *Tradition* no more than a *written Law*, and consequently belong not to this Controversie. And thus I think I should quit my self well enough.

Uncle. Soon enough at least, but let us see if it be with as good speed as much haste. For suppose they should reply, that the neglect of Gods Law must of necessity breed oblivion; and therefore that either Gods Law was forgotten, or shortly would have been, if the punishment of the Deluge had not prevented it. And for the men you cite of *Abraham's* time, they were but few, and though in that time Gods Law had yet some little force; look but into *Moses* his time, and you shall see all over-run with idolatry. For Heathen Religions, 'tis said of the *Druides*, that their Ceremonies were not written, but delivered by memory in Verse from the elder to the younger, and so conserved: and the Histories of the *Welch* and *Irish* seem to have been conserved in the like manner by the *Bardes*, but how full of fables they were every man knows. So that these things seem sufficient to discredit *Tradition*.

Nephew. I must intreat your helping hand to fasten me upon this shaking floor, otherwise I perceive I am too weak to stand of my self.

Uncle. 'Tis not the floor you stand upon, but the want of confidence which makes you so unsteady. For tell me, I pray, if you remember whereon relies the firmness of *Tradition*.

Nephew. You told me, the *Tradition* of *Christian* Faith was a great while a planting in the hearts of men by the force of Miracles, and that not onely in their understandings, but also in their wills and affections, and so cultivated untill the main of the People were constantly perswaded there

there was no ſalvation without it. This was done at the ſame time in many Countreys, not knowing one of another, nor being able to correſpond and frame any draught of belief together, but every one receiving what was delivered him from his Preacher.

Uncle. Why now then Coſin, return to your Objections, and look how they urge, and what force they have againſt this your Declaration of *Tradition*.

Nephew. As for *Adam's* children, I ſee that one Man and one Woman were the onely Witneſſes of ſuch a thing, as the Parties to whom they told it could hardly believe, it was ſo ſtrange; nay, themſelves had ſo little experience of thoſe ſtrange things which they told, that (for any thing we know) they never ſo much as taſted of any fruit in *Paradiſe* but of the forbidden Tree; and what care they had of any Religion, more than to recommend Gods ſervice to their children, and that onely as long as they lived with them, we know not, ſo that it ſeems what they taught took no ſtrong Root, nor in many. For *Noah* the ſame anſwer may be given, two of his ſons parting ſhortly from him either into far Countreys, or at leaſt into ſuch a diſtance, as they ſeldom came to ſee him; wherefore I perceive there is a great difference betwixt the delivery of *Chriſt's* Goſpel, and the Law of God to thoſe Fathers of the *Old Teſtament*.

Uncle. Your remarks are good; and indeed ſeeing we have required that *Tradition* ſhould have the continuance of Nature, we muſt ſee that it be planted accordingly, which you have well noted to have been performed in *Chriſt's* Law, but not in the *Tradition* of the *old* Law, the Fathers and People of that time being much hindered by the great buſineſs of the worlds plantation, every man ſeeking to plant Countreys, build Cities, finde out Commodities for the conſervation of mans life, which were Employments far different from the thoughts of Heaven, and things of the next world. To this you may add, that there was

not

not then any ſettled Orders of Prieſts, and men whoſe function ſhould be to inculcate the neceſſity of Religion into mens ears and hearts, which we know the Apoſtles had care to perform every where. Again there was no ſuch correſpondence betwixt Countrey and Countrey in thoſe times, as hath ever been amongſt *Chriſtians*, ſpecially by the mediation of a chief Biſhop, which *Chriſt* hath ſet amongſt us. And no doubt but theſe two laſt Points be two chief Cauſes of the propagation and conſervation of *Chriſtian* Faith. You may yet add, that even the Points of Faith were not then able to work upon mans nature ſo powerfully as ſince *Chriſt's* coming, according to our yeſternights diſcourſe. So that the Root and ſtrength of *Tradition* being grounded upon this, that ſuch a belief is fixed in Peoples hearts of ſeveral Nations, the Examples fail in three things. Firſt, that the multitude was not capable of it, it being ſo ſpiritual and abſtract. Secondly, that it was not inculcated with that fervour of ſpirit, aſſiſtance of the *holy Ghoſt*, and abundance of continual Miracles, as *Chriſt's* Law was. Thirdly, that there was not a ſet form and inſtitution of Prieſts and Governours, to joyn all Nations in communion for the conſervation of their belief. Wherefore it never had the Root and nature of an univerſal *Tradition*. And by theſe Examples you may eaſily anſwer all other Objections of this nature. And now I will leave you leaſt I ſhould over-weary both you and my ſelf.

Nephew. You ſay well, Uncle, yet that I may be ſure to have fully conceived the main drift of your inſtructions, I pray let me ſee if I can make

§. 15. *The concluſion of all our diſcourſe.*

IT was firſt your intention to give me a Rule how to govern my ſelf in the choice of Religion, then you concluded that Scripture could not be this Rule, whereupon you laid me down two ways how to reſolve my ſelf. The firſt was that

that ſtanding upon the Ground of Prepoſſeſſion, there was no likelihood or probability that the *Proteſtants* Arguments could be ſufficient to overballance the *Catholicks*, becauſe they muſt be convincing clearly, or elſe were to be rejected; and that the *Proteſtants* ſhould bring any convincing and demonſtrative Arguments againſt the *Catholicks* there is no apparence, *Catholicks* being more in number, in quality greater Scholars, and in life more virtuous; and on the contrary ſide, *Proteſtants* having no Principles or command which may make them agree amongſt themſelves. And you ſhewed me, that though this perſwaſion did not evidently convince the *Catholick* faith to be true, yet did it manifeſtly prove that the *Catholick* was to be choſen by an unlearned man. Your ſecond way was by giving a direct Proof that the *Catholick* Doctrine is true, which you did in three ſeveral manners. Firſt, by ſhewing that it was no hard matter for the *Catholick* Church to conſerve the truth of her Doctrine, if ſhe were carefull, which Hiſtories plainly ſhew ſhe was. Secondly, declaring that Nature forces men to have care of Religion, and therefore that it was impoſſible any Errour ſhould ſo creep into the Church, as that it ſhould be univerſally received, the very nature of man and humane affairs contradicting its progreſs. Thirdly, ſhewing how the Church now relying upon *Tradition*, muſt of neceſſity have ever done ſo, and that if it hath ever done ſo, it could not let any falſhood creep in, nor ſuffer any Errour to be generally admitted. This is all I remember, ſaving the ſolving of ſome Objections, and the diſcovering of ſome of my impertinent Anſwers, which I hope you will excuſe and forget. If I have miſſed, I pray direct me.

Uncle. You have taken good notice, & I think my pains well beſtowed, onely I would intreat you to make a little reflection and compariſon betwixt the knowledg, which we have by theſe means, and that which Scripture affords us, if we uſe it in a litigious way, as in Controverſies we neceſſarily muſt. And you ſhall finde that *Tradition* is ground-

ed upon *that* which all men agree in, and upon *that* which is common to all Ages, all Nations, all conditions. But the knowledg, which we have by Scripture, is grounded upon *that* which is different in every Nation. Hence ſprings another difference, to wit, that the one is planted in Nature, and in what God created in man: the other in what men themſelves framed, and that not by deſign or art, but by cuſtom and chance. Out of which again enſues, that the one is capable of neceſſity, and conſequently of a perfect demonſtration, as all natural things are, the other not. The one is fixed upon Univerſals, the other vagabond in Particulars. As for Example, who is able to demonſtrate that a word in Controverſie hath no other ſenſe than *that* which is neceſſary for his purpoſe? Or where the conſtruction may be made divers ways, that the true one is *that* which he pleadeth? Who can demonſtrate amongſt varieties of Texts which was in the Autograph? Or that the Copies we have are not defective? and the like, which ordinarily are neceſſary, if we will evidently convince our intent out of the place we choſe. On the other ſide, to ſhew that whole multitudes of ſeveral Nations cannot miſs in what hath been a thouſand times over and over inculcated unto them, that a World cannot conſpire to cozen their Poſterity, that mankinde cannot accept of a Doctrine againſt an evident Principle, which they likewiſe hold and maintain (theſe being the maximes *Tradition* depends on;) to ſhew, I ſay, theſe things, there needs no deep learning, being both known of themſelves, and alſo as neceſſarily conjoynt and dependant of mans nature, as his other natural actions are, and therefore may bear as good a demonſtration as they; which if we have not, it is not through any defect or incapacity of the ſubject, but through the want of our looking into it, and that either becauſe we do not take the right way, or that we do not beſtow ſufficient pains in the proſecution of it. So that in fine, although the *Roman* Church had fallen (which is impoſſible) into thoſe Errours, which the *Proteſtants* pre-

pretend, yet were it better for a man to content himſelf with the Good that remains in it, than to caſt himſelf into an endleſs and fruitleſs Maze of Diſputations, with trouble to all the world, and that to no other effect, than to make People unſettled, and by their unſettledneſs to neglect Religion. But Gods wiſdom (as you ſee) hath provided an Evidence for thoſe that will take pains to ſeek it. Firſt, that the Points in Controverſie are of importance, and neceſſary to be known. Secondly, that they cannot be ſo known by Scripture, as is requiſite for Deciſions againſt contentious men. And thirdly, that they may be certainly known by reſting quiet in the boſome of the *Catholick* Church, which God of his mercy give you and me grace to do both living and dying.

FINIS.